MICHAEL A. AQUINO

Dear Professor Truzzi,

Thank you for your letter of May 15. Yes, I do remember you from the Church of Satan, and of course I am familiar with your writings in sociology publications, your work with the Committee for the Scientific Investigation of Claims of the Paranormal, etc. While you are a respected professional in your field and a pleasant person as well, I will be candid and say that I have certain reservations concerning the pursuits in which you have been engaged. Perhaps the best way to explain myself is to quote a passage from *The Church of Satan*, a 75,000-word history that I wrote last year:

> Randall Alfred may have been the first researcher to exploit the Church of Satan, but he was not the last. During the following years there ensued a veritable parade of scholars interested in analyzing the institution for academic publications. Among them were Marcello Truzzi, another sociologist, whose comments appeared in the *Sociological Quarterly*, Winter 1972 as "The Occult Revival as Popular Culture: Some Random Observations on the Old and the Nouveau Witch"; and James Moody, a professor of anthropology.
>
> The content of these academic articles became depressingly familiar. The Church and its High Priest would be held up for examination like insects under a piece of glass, Satanism's precepts would be dissected according to the current scholarly jargon, and the author would somehow manage to avoid concluding with a strong and uncompromising personal endorsement of either the Church or Anton himself. At a time when Anton could have used every endorsement by established intellectuals that he could get, they would accept his trust, hospitality, and even the Satanic Priesthood itself and then melt away like ice in sunlight. Why Anton continued to tolerate them I do not know to this day, except that they could be very

> charming to him when visiting him. Their attitude remains one of my most painful memories of the Age of Satan, and I am glad that the Temple of Set has seen nothing of them.

The path that Anton LaVey chose to travel was not just fun and games in the newspapers; it was difficult and dangerous as well. Difficult because he was struggling to explore and communicate a very special sort of philosophy that had been obscured and discredited for years. Dangerous because ignorant onlookers, concluding that anything un-Christian was fair game, ensured that he and his family were kept amused by bomb and death threats, rifle shots, and continuous vandalism.

Anton and Diane put up with this because they believed in what they were doing. They could have run the C/S for profit, after the fashion of religious / occult rip-off organizations, but they didn't. They could have quit in discouragement under the severe social pressure, but they didn't. Gradually, after the Church of Satan found its identity, two categories of persons affiliated with it. In the first category were those who thought that Anton LaVey was a colorful character and a fun fellow to spend an evening with, and who enjoyed dropping his name and that of the C/S at parties. But in polite, professional circles they could never quite bring themselves to say: "The son of a bitch is right, and I for one endorse him."

The second category did just that. The people in that category made the Church of Satan a reality, not just at 6114 California Street but all over the country. They felt about Anton LaVey about how the troops in Valley Forge probably felt about George Washington. They put up with quite a bit of ostracism and outright persecution themselves. But they didn't give a damn, because they believed in the essential worth of what they were doing.

Unfortunately there were never quite enough of the second category of Satanist, and finally Anton and Diane just caved in. They figured that society was just using the C/S for entertainment; therefore they would cash in on it. Hence the decision to use the initiatory degrees as a profit device.

The result was that the second category left en masse and founded the Temple of Set [which tolerates no first-category members]. We feel very unhappy about Anton and Diane LaVey, but we are helpless to do anything for them.

If there is anger, frustration, and resentment in the Temple of Set, then, it is directed primarily against the first category of Satanists - those who might have helped Anton weather the storm, but who didn't because they were afraid that endorsing him would taint their professional reputations and might cause them some personal discomfort or embarrassment. The more prominent the person, the more inevitable the disclaimer. Of course the more prominent the person, the more value his endorsement would have had. In intellectual circles the endorsement of a respected university professor would have meant a great deal. Did it happen? Not quite. In the 10/29/78 San Jose Mercury News:

> The changes that have taken place in the Church of Satan since LaVey and other officials of the church decided to cease all public activities in San Francisco have been carefully noted by a number of sociologists.
>
> "It`s a very elite group now," said Dr. Marcello Truzzi, head of the Department of Sociology at Eastern Michigan University in Ypsilanti.
>
> Truzzi commented that "They are more selective about those they accept as members, especially in the inner circles."
>
> "LaVey has been able to deal more introspectively with his Satanic philosophy since he has gotten away from the public crazies," said Truzzi, who also is editor of "The Zetelic Scholar," (sic) a magazine of skeptical inquiry and academic writing on paranormal claims.
>
> Although Truzzi says the majority of members of the Church of Satan are, in fact, mail-order members and geographically isolated joiners, there are clearly several hundred "fully participating and disciplined members in the various parts of the world."

I will leave you to imagine the impression that this observation made upon the Temple of Set. We could have laughed it off had it not been accompanied by a photograph of Anton with fourteen years of death in his eyes. As it was, it just made us feel sick.

In the academic world there is automatic justification for dissecting anything, and sociologists dissect social phenomena. Strictly speaking, I can`t criticize you any more than I can criticize a mosquito for taking a bite out of my arm. But I can apply repellent.

Sincerely,

May 19, 1979

MAA:g

Zetetic scholar

An Independent Scientific Review of Claims of Anomalies and the Paranormal

Marcello Truzzi, *Editor*

May 21, 1979

Dear Mr. Aquino:

Thank you for your informative--if critical--letter of reply to my earlier letter to you. I appreciate your taking the time and trouble.

Unfortunately, we have rather differing perceptions of my role re the C of S. I can not speak of other social scientists--some of whom may have knowingly exploited Anton-- but if you have read my writings, my own attention to the C of S was always intentionally minimal and never critical of Anton eventhough he knows of my many disagreements with him. You apparently do not appreciate that my friendship with Anton extends to our common circus background and is rooted in matters very much prior to his development of the C of S. I think it fair to say that Anton used the value of his association with me at least as much--if not more--than I ever used my association with him. In fact, my references to the C of S in my writings have been quite intentionally minimal in large part because I had no interest in being publicly critical. Unlike some, I was never interested in airing whatever dirty linen I learned about the C of S. Anton understood this and, I think, appreciated it. As for the San Jose Mercury News quotes, they more or less accurately reflect my observations and discussions with Anton when I visited with him last summer.

I doubt that you will want to further correspond with me given your comments, but let me assure you that my interest in these matters remains more private than professional in the sense that I would not publish anything dealing with the confidences given me without first obtaining the permission of my informants. I have no interest in exploiting Anton, you, or anyone else who could be damaged by my publications.

Sincerely,

Marcello Truzzi

Marcello Truzzi

P.S. I hope to eventually read your lengthy history of the C of S when it is published--presuming it becomes commercially available.

Department of Sociology
Eastern Michigan University
Ypsilanti, Michigan 48197

(313) 487-0184

MICHAEL A. AQUINO

Dear Professor Truzzi,

You have missed the point entirely. It is not whether you exploited Anton more than he exploited you, nor does it have anything to do with your personal friendship with him. The point is rather that you affiliated with the Church of Satan without an understanding of or commitment to the higher essence which it represented. Accordingly you contributed nothing to the real Church; your perception of it never went beyond that of an interest group centered around the personality of Anton LaVey.

As I have said, I do not fault you for being what you are. But I do say that the Temple of Set, being a refinement of that real Church of Satan, has no interest in dilettantes. They would waste our time in that, while they might honestly enjoy association with us, they would lack the capacity or the dedication to put our principles into practice.

I understand that you have told Phil Folkler that the Church of Satan was intended by Anton as nothing more than a con game from the very beginning. If you believe that, then you never experienced the Church of Satan. And if Anton is the source of the comment, then I presume it remains his way of coming to grips with 1975. As for your comments to the San Jose newspaper, they made you appear ridiculous to the rather large number of Setians who know the truth about the Church of Satan. Frankly it looks as though you are either a deliberate liar or a person whose trust has been abused. Either way it is not a good image for the Editor of the Zetetic.

Sincerely,

May 27, 1979

Zetetic scholar

An Independent Scientific Review of Claims of Anomalies and the Paranormal

Marcello Truzzi, *Editor*

May 31, 1979

Dear Michael Aquino:

Thanks for your letter and Temple of Set enclosure both of which I find of great interest.

I feel I should correct one clear misimpression. I did not tell Phil Folker that the Church of Satan was merely a con game and Anton certainly has never said that to me. The point, which Phil apparently missed, is more complex than that. As I see it, the viewpoint of Anton and the C of S was that much of the world's activities consisted of con games and that the important thing is to be one of the manipulators rather than one of the marks. The real message of the C of S includes the approval of such manipulation. Since performance and success are the real hallmarks of the advanced Satanist, degrees and such trappings are part of the manipulative devices used upon those who have not ascended to the truth of their fundamental unimportance. That is, degrees and such are only means to ends. If the C of S could be strengthened by selling degrees, that end justified such means. From what I understand of Anton's views (as he has published them in THE SATANIC BIBLE), his actions in selling degrees and giving them at his own discretion is perfectly consistent with the general philosophy he always has put forward. What amuses me about things is the charge that he's somehow being a hypocrite. If he had kept his sale of degrees a secret from you and others, that might be true, but the fact that he let you know about it shows his amazing openness about the matter. Since you see the sale of the degrees as a betrayal, you obviously placed more value than Anton did upon them (as Anton openly admitted to you).It seems to me that Anton took you into his confidence in terms of the backstage motives in his actions and you responded like a mark instead of as a fellow manipulator. As I have always under stood Anton's views, even hypocrisy can be a virtue if properly used to obtain valuable ends. I can see a Christian complain anout a Satanist's hypocrisy, but I find it hard to understand a true Satanist complaining about its conscious use by another Satanist. Satanism represents an elitism which, I should think, should logically preclude such complaints of being manipulated.

Finally, I might add that I don't really understand what it was I said in the San Jose paper that you found so distorted. It is not as though I had said the C of S was growing.

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In any case, my remarks to Phil Folker represented my interpretation of Anton's actions and statements, as do my above comments. I don't speak for him,and he has never taken me fully into his confidence about these matters (nor have I asked him to do so).

You are correct in your view that I would be inappropriate as one seeking membership in your group. But I think you are incorrect in so far as you suggest I might be a dilettante re such matters. If my interest was purely professional, you might be right, but I have indicated to you that my interest goes well beyond that. If I were a mere dilettante, I would have published negative things about the C of S. The fact that I have not done so and been protective of my friendships should demonstrate that much.

Again, thanks for your letter and materials.

Sincerely,

Marcello Truzzi

Marcello Truzzi

MICHAEL A. AQUINO

Dear Professor Truzzi,

If the real message of the Church of Satan were merely an endorsement of Machiavelli [or, in a more elementary sense, of the Law of the Jungle], then in our opinion it would have been neither Satanic nor a church in the precise sense of the terms. Those who affiliated with it would have been seeking simply a ritualistic submergence of the intellectual self in instinctive, animalistic behavior, and the only distinction between this approach and that of conventional religions would be that the process would now be acknowledged as such.

However the individuals who founded the Temple of Set had come to understand something more profound in the Black Arts. It was that true Satanism represented a desire of the intelligent ego to free itself from natural law - to become in and of itself a "god" capable of controlling natural phenomena in terms of abstractly conceived values. Hence the Satan we came to know was the Satan of Anatole France and John Milton - not some twisted, vicious personification of religious paranoia. In worshipping Satan we were not making a fetish out of whatever conventional religion considered evil; we were worshipping that spark of creativity within ourselves that enables us to go, in Nietzsche`s words, beyond good and evil.

Anton may not have emphasized this higher form of Satanism in the Satanic Bible, but in subsequent years he came to understand it and express it very well, both in discussion and in Workings of ritual magic. In that sense his 1975 decision was hypocritical, because the initiatory degrees had attained worth only because of what they had come to represent in terms of this higher Satanism. When Anton insisted upon prostituting them, we were as indignant as you would be if the Graduate Dean of EMU suddenly advertised academic (non-honorary) M.A.s and Ph.D.s in sociology for sale in order to make money for himself or for the university. [At least I presume you would be indignant.]

So if you were not bothered by Anton`s decision, then I conclude that you had no idea what those degrees had come to symbolize to serious Satanists. Accordingly I would stand by my evaluation of you as a dilettante, per Webster`s: "A person having a superficial interest in an art or a branch of knowledge." To get an idea of the sort of basic familiarity with the Black Arts that we expect all Setians to acquire, you might ask the Executive Secretary of the CSICP to send you the copy of our reading list that he has had on file for the last year or so.

Your comments in the San Jose paper purported to substantiate the Church of Satan`s size and excellence. From our point of view the only Satanists deserving of the name left the Church in 1975. Hence we concluded that you were either the willing or the unknowing accomplice of Anton`s in making your statements. In the former case you would simply be a liar; in the latter case you would - to use your terms - be one of Anton`s "marks" for manipulation. In either case your image was none the better for it. Paul Kurtz et al. have made a big thing of the judiciousness with which CSICP conducts its investigations and evaluations. If the Zetetic Editor can be sold snake oil so easily, why should CSICP`s other conclusions be regarded as authoritative?

By the way, I don`t think that Phil Folkler misunderstood you at all. I think you were tossing a few rocks at the Temple of Set, assuming that no one in your audience knew enough to sharpshoot your accusations. When Folkler caught you with your pants down, up comes the old "manipulation" excuse. We`ve seen that card played before, and it doesn`t impress us much. In fact it`s rather irritating, because it`s so transparent a rationalization for the failure of straightforward interaction. I`ll tell you something: We have the greatest possible regard for the truly unique accomplishments of Anton LaVey and the Church of Satan. Accordingly there is not much to be gained by trying to make us admire the Church for bullshit reasons.

Sincerely,

June 12, 1979

MAA:g

Post Office Box 243
Santa Barbara, Calif. 93102

June 16, X

Dear Satanist:

A short time ago you received one of the packets of documents and correspondence that I mailed on June 10th. Since that time you have contacted me to endorse the actions I took in the name of Satan as indicated therein. I am well aware of the shock this packet must have caused to you, and of the pain your decision must have entailed. It was all the more agonizing to me, inasmuch as I have been very close to Anton and Diane LaVey for many years. Had there been an alternative course of action open to me, I should have taken it. But there was none, unless I opted to remain silent, retire quietly from the Church of Satan, and leave the rest of you in the dark. This I could not do.

He who speaks for the Infernal Mandate and who is visibly reinforced by the Will of Satan must assume that Mandate. I have accepted, and I ask your friendship, encouragement, and support in the tasks that lie ahead.

Now I have some comments concerning the Church of Satan, after which we will turn our attention to the future.

As I said in my last letter to the LaVeys, I am convinced that, until this unfortunate turn of events, the Church of Satan held the true Mandate. I am and will remain opposed to any efforts by Satanists or non-Satanists to discredit or minimize the many positive accomplishments of that organization, its High Priest, and its High Priestess. In fact I know that the full philosophical formulae of Anton Szandor LaVey have never been fully studied or appreciated. It is the Curse of a Magus V° to be misunderstood, ignored, or disbelieved - usually because he is simply ahead of his time. Aleister Crowley was unable to live from the proceeds of his works a half-century ago; today others reap wealth from his legacy. For years Anton LaVey has been forced to watch the most inane and superficial non-Satanists reaping wealth from the romance of Satanism while he, its author, has not. Worse than that, he has too often been forced into the role of an "advisor" or "consultant" for writers, journalists, and film producers who considered him little more than a quaint accessory with promotional value.

I am not speaking of one or two isolated incidents, but of a long series of injustices. Largely responsible for the authentic atmosphere of Rosemary's Baby, he did not receive even a credit line. The literature market is now flooded with novels and occult books containing concepts, ritual sequences, and even full quoted paragraphs [see The Reincarnation of Peter Proud!] from his books. But there is never the courtesy of a footnote, much less a percentage of royalties. Do you think he got a cent from The Devil's Avenger? He did not; all the proceeds are destined for the author and publisher. Most recently he took the original script of a really atrocious B-grade horror movie called The Devil's Rain, revamped it from start to finish, and spent several weeks in Mexico working with the actors and extras to produce a first-class film. As long as he was valuable, he was given a free hand by the director, and star Ernest Borgnine [who is the film's Satanic Priest] was quick to accept an honorary III°. When he had outlived his usefulness, Anton LaVey was abruptly dismissed by the director over a minor issue [see the June issue of Argosy], and a short time later Borgnine pooh-poohed his honorary III° before a nationwide television audience on the Merv Griffin Show.

The Devil's Rain will be coming out in only a few weeks. Thanks to the better part of a year's work by Dr. LaVey, it will be a smashing success. [I saw the original script last year, and it wouldn't have made the 2 A.M. movie slot on a trunk T.V. station.] I don't know what compensation he has received, but I do know that he is once more to be cut out of the large part of the pie. This time you'll probably see him in the credits, all right, because his image and glamor will be useful in selling the movie!

Dr. and Mrs. LaVey are a long way from living in abject poverty. But, at the same time, they are hardly riding the crest of the gigantic financial wave they have been so instrumental in creating and sustaining over the past decade. Don't believe all that stuff in The Devil's Avenger about ten mansions and a fleet of yachts, nor the crazy statistics about 25,000 Active members and 2.5 million [paying?] students. All this is P.R. garbage that he's been backed into by frenzied disciples and a no-holds-barred press over the years. So, if you were wondering why he should need to sell the Satanic degrees if he had a Church income of $250 grand/year and a consulting income of $25 million/year [at $10 per "student" per year!], it isn't because the ten mansions and fleet are expensive to maintain!

There's another problem. When you've created something like the Church of Satan and been up front in the spotlight for ten years as its High Priest, you can't just take a conventional position as a psychologist, financier, or "normal" business executive. Not only because he wouldn't want to, but because none of the rest of us would want him to either. Nietzsche's Supermen are not allowed to regress.

All of this is information that, while Anton LaVey was High Priest, I was bound by my oath not to discuss, much as it rankled me. Ironically enough it is his same fall from that office that now permits me to do justice to him. This scenario does not excuse his decision to corrupt the Church of Satan itself, but I think it does go a long way towards explaining it. He was and is a strong man, but the physical and psychological pressures upon him have been stronger.

I don't bring this up as a swan song. Rather I say flatly that we have a job to do here. We are all going to right a big fat wrong, among other things, and we're going to start now. It's time for Anton Szandor LaVey's true friends to show their colors and get rid of that court of physical and mental eunuchs at 6114 who have sapped his strength, nerve, and judgment over so many years. Now we start:

The machinery of the old Church of Satan, Inc. is no good to us. We don't know what the books look like, nor is there any responsible financial or secretarial staff to which we may turn. "Lana Green" and "J.M.K." are merely front names. I don't know what debts there may be, or what administrative snarls may exist. As for the Council of Nine, it has met only infrequently - and then only as a program advisory panel, not as a true board of directors in the corporate sense. We are going to change all that.

The first thing we do is to incorporate a non-profit organization with a name similar to but distinct from the Church of Satan. This is in the process of being done right now. I will tell you the exact name as soon as it has been legally protected.

Initially I am going to hold all of the reins in this corporate entity. As soon as I am satisfied that it is functioning efficiently, and that the officials are familiar with its machinery, a true Council of Nine will be selected and empowered as a corporate Board of Trustees. It will function as a corporate board of directors, and it will have the power to remove the High Priest [who will thus serve in a capacity similar to that of a corporate president] should it feel that he has lost the Mandate to execute his office. While he does execute his office, however, the authority of the High Priest will be absolute, short of tampering with the Nine. The Council of Nine will also have the authority to fill any vacancies that occur within it. As for contractual and financial statements, they will be made available to all officials holding the III° and higher [at minimum].

All censorship and communications restriction ends. III°+ officials will have access to the full membership list. Addresses of local and regional newsletters will once more be released to all, and prior clearance or delay of all such newsletters will be a thing of the past. Each new member's name will be made known to all III°+ officials, and he himself will immediately receive the name and address of a Witch or Warlock capable of providing him initial personalized guidance and of referring him to other Satanists if his efforts merit it.

There will be a monthly organizational newsletter, successor to the Hoof. But this time it will talk frankly. No more half-hidden references, propaganda-tinged articles [by me or anyone else!], or taboo subjects, personalities, or books. Everything out front and above-board.

Impersonal standards for all degrees will be established and maintained. All degrees will be conferred by the High Priest initially. Later IV° officials may be empowered to evaluate candidates for the III° and II° in their spheres of influence and authority. The High Priest will remain the sole authority to confer the IV°, but each new IV° will require approval by a majority of the Council of Nine.

→ No more non-member subscriptions or non-member affiliations under any guise. Anyone who expects to get anything out of this organization will have to join it 100%. No more honorary Priesthoods. No Magisters or Priests who don't do a damned thing. Each new member will be expected to produce appropriate evidence during his initial year of membership that he is practicing Satanism forthrightly and unashamedly. Otherwise he will not be permitted to renew his membership, fee or no fee. The same holds true for each Satanist of each degree for each year. And the standards will get tougher as the degrees get higher.

Each IV° and III° official will be expected to concern himself with the education, encouragement, and assistance of Satanists of lesser degrees who evidence a sincere and productive desire to learn and advance.

The organization will actively and aggressively spread the word about itself and thus seek to increase its size and influence. We will not try to cajole or convert anyone. We will act to ensure that all who of their own volition would become members if they knew the true facts [from us, not stuffed-rats-and-tombstones stories in the press!] will do so.

Of course all this is going to entail some work, but the point is that the result will be a large, flexible, exciting, stimulating, and affluent organization in which everyone can have a good deal of fun. We're going to bring the Conclaves back, design and build ceremonial facilities that would make Lovecraft and Wheatley drool, and in general channel our assets back to the entire membership in every way we can think of. We are going to be, if you will pardon the expression, the hottest thing going. The control measures I have just discussed are intended only to (a) build up our size & prosperity, (b) eliminate all deadwood, and (c) keep it clean. We're going to do this the way it should have been done from the beginning. And you are going to like what you see getting up from Dr. Frankenstein's operating table!

As for the mass membership of the old Church of Satan, I am simply going to let my 6/10 one-page letter separate the wheat from the chaff. I also depend upon each of you to identify for me the promising members in your respective areas. [For your information, any letters to the Editor of the Hoof which may have been sent to the S.F. address over the past year or so, haven't made it to Santa Barbara. So I'm somewhat blind where the opinions and quality of the membership-at-large are concerned.] If necessary, we simply start from scratch.

And what of Anton LaVey in all this? At the moment I imagine he's sticking every hatpin at 6114 in a Voodoo doll with black hair, bloodshot eyes, and pointed eyebrows. For the moment I'm not going to get excited about it, nor about any printed non-compliments concerning me that may issue forth from San Francisco. Kindly disregard them; I will clarify anything that needs clarifying and let the rest go by the board. We will keep him advised of our progress, and I miss my guess if he doesn't wind up being damned proud of what we put together according to his basic philosophy. And very soon we'll be in a position to take that pressure off him, ensuring that he will be able to enjoy the justly-deserved fruits of his labors. Then we'll see the original Anton Szandor LaVey back again in full color, the way he ought to be. He remains the true Magus V° of the Age of Satan, and you and I and the Devil are going to spread the Word around.

Rege Satanas!

Michael A. Aquino
Magister Templi IV°
High Priest and Exarch of Hell

P.S.: A few of you who received those packets have not yet contacted me. I am sending this to you anyway, because you should know about it.

Post Office Box 243
Santa Barbara, Calif. 93102

June 19, X

Questions and Answers ...

Q: Your Xerox letter of June 16th seems to rationalize and excuse the actions of Anton Szandor LaVey. Are you back-pedaling your "hard-line" stand? Is this a new case of "Gerald Ford" pardoning "Richard Nixon"?

A: On page #2 of my 6/16 letter I indicate that I am *explaining*, not *excusing*. I felt that you should all know the pressures that have been acting upon him, so that you would realize that there was more to all this than a sudden whim to cash in on the degree system. Remember how hard it always is to put yourself in another person's shoes. Also remember that there would not have *been* a decade of the Church of Satan if he hadn't decided to organize it, and that, for the most part, the organization was positive and constructive. We are now going to try to take the best and get rid of the worst. And, where Anton LaVey is concerned, I ask you to not become so obsessed with the latter that you forget the former. Dig?

Q: If "Lana Green" and "J.M.K." are front names, then who have we been talking to on the phone to Central?

A: "Lana Green" is usually Mrs. LaVey, though it may also be any other lady on the premises at the time. Kincaid is a real person, but his name is signed to anything the LaVeys wish to issue under a name other than theirs.

Q: Why don't you answer your damned phone in Santa Barbara?

A: I hate telephones and keep this one only for emergencies. I prefer to communicate with friends and associates either face-to-face or by letter.

Q: When you saw this crisis building up, why did you not try to discuss it informally with the LaVeys? Why all the "sterile" letter-writing?

A: At issue here was a very "black-and-white" decision - Were the LaVeys selling out or not. It would have served no purpose for me to have sought some response from them that would have mollified me while enabling them to continue with a decision that had already been made. I employ letters because (a) I thus have a record of precisely what I have said at any point in time, and (b) I have a like record of what others say to me. The importance of both points should be self-evident right now. How many of you would have believed this entire development had you not seen it in print?

Q: Who are these "court eunuchs" you refer to?

A: See the personality profiles in *The Devil's Avenger* for a good idea of the type. The individual people come and go. I could cite names, but no *constructive* purpose would now be served by doing so. The point is that years of being surrounded by servile, fawning personality cultists have had their effect on Anton LaVey. He exists in a "world" cut off from the true Satanists of the country. Of late the organization has become almost an embarrassment to him, because its reality kept intruding upon its fantasy at court. The phenomenon is common: Consider the Manchu court and the "inner circle" of Adolf Hitler during the latter days of Nazi Germany.

Q: What are you trying to do? Destroy Anton LaVey?

A: No, what I am doing is preventing Anton LaVey from destroying all the good that he has done. If I had allowed the existing situation to continue, there would have finally been nothing at all to rescue from the wreckage of the Church of Satan. And LaVey himself would have gone down in history as simply a con man who exhausted his "shtick". That would be an injustice both to him and to Satanism itself. The current revelations are embarrassing to him at the moment, just as Oz The Great And Terrible was taken aback when revealed to be a man behind a curtain. But the man behind the curtain was a very good man, one who rejoiced to discover that the people of the Emerald City liked him for himself and for what he had done for them. I want our own Oz to know that he doesn't have to hide behind a curtain either - that none of his worthwhile followers will respect him any the less for being one of us. True, the personality cultists and court eunuchs will depart, bitter and disillusioned. Don't hold your breath waiting for me to shed any tears.

Q: Where does Mrs. LaVey stand in all this?

A: Diane LaVey is one of the most intelligent persons you and I are ever likely to meet. The initial organization and growth of the Church of Satan would have been quite impossible without her direction and coordination. She has also been something of a Henry Kissinger, building and maintaining channels of communication between her husband and his key bases of support in the outside world. At the same time she is loyal to Dr. LaVey as she should be, and it would be wrong to expect or even ask her to "side against him" in any policy matter. Her 6/4 letter to me should accordingly be taken with a grain of salt. It does not represent Diane LaVey as an independent, detached observer, but rather as a person so fenced in by the house of cards around her that she is unable to move as she knows she would like to. Hence the "surprising" anger of her tone. The LaVeys are painted into a corner and cannot move. It is this tone of Diane LaVey, rather than the accusations of the text itself, which convinced me that things had gone too far.

Q: How do you think the LaVeys regard you right now?

A: Probably along the line of "Et tu, Brute". Over the years they have taken me into their confidence more than any other "field" official of the Church, and I expect they now regret this, feeling that I am deliberately using my privileged information against them. The fact of the matter is that I am going to get them out of the corner into which they have painted themselves, and there is just no painless way to do it. Five years [if that long] down the road they will be the better for it - and the happier too. So I consider myself something of a "rotten-weather friend" in this case.

Q: What was on the next page of your 5/25 letter to Dr. LaVey?

A: Small talk completely unrelated to the material on page #1.

Q: Who is the accountant referred to?

A: I don't know who he/she is, or even if there is one. I presume they use a C.P.A. for the relatively complicated affairs of personal and corporate finances.

Q: Is the Church of Satan, Inc. set up as a profit-type corporation?

A: I think so, although I have never seen the papers. Some time back the LaVeys and I discussed whether the Church should go through about $1,000 worth of legal fees to become a tax-exempt church according to I.R.S. standards. But this is not the same thing as a non-profit corporation or foundation, which is so designated because it is not operated for the compensation of any individuals involved.

Q: Have you yourself ever profited from the Church of Satan financially?

A: I have received monthly checks averaging between $25-50 for the last couple of years, for the purposes of offsetting expenses incurred in editing the Hoof and performing other time/expense-consuming work for the Central Grotto. These checks have not surpassed personal expenses of a Church-related nature, a fact substantiated by my own records and tax returns. [I must mention that the monthly expense checks were begun and maintained upon the initiative of Dr. & Mrs. LaVey as a thoughtful gesture on their part. This is one more indication of the sort of people they are deep down inside. Many another person would have continued to accept the Hoof work, etc. gratis and let sleeping dogs lie.]

Q: How many people are there in the Church of Satan?

A: There are approximately 250-300 paying Active members on the Cloven Hoof mailing list at this time. There are another 100 non-member subscribers besides that. Membership turnover in the Church has been substantial over the last decade, however, so it is not necessarily wrong to say that the Church has several thousand Active and Inactive members. Most fraternal organizations use such statistics in counting their cumulative membership. Persons are dropped from the rolls only if they expressly resign their membership. Both Active and cumulative figures for the Church of Satan are far larger, however, than those for any serious occult organization of the past. At its height, Crowley's A∴A∴ had about 80 members! [That includes the O.T.O.]

Q: Why have you gone along with everything up until now?

A: There have been a number of decisions that I have not liked, but, as long as I had confidence in Dr. LaVey's judgment, I assumed that everything would work itself out. [You can get a good idea of what I didn't like by reading between the lines of page #3 of my 6/16 letter.] A good subordinate works within guidelines that have been set, assuming that the top dog can see the situation with a greater perspective. These recent developments were so contradictory to the prime tenets of Satanism, however, that it was impossible to view them as "one step backward in order to take two steps forward".

Q: What do you expect us to do now?

A: If you have confidence in me and support my position, tell me so. As I send you plans for the new organization, tell me what you like and don't like. Discuss everything freely amongst yourselves. The only thing I don't want you to do is to use any information that I give you to harm the public/press standing of either the old Church of Satan or the LaVeys themselves. I am proving to them that they can trust people like you better than they can the court of eunuchs. Don't make me a liar.

Q: What precisely is this "Infernal Mandate" you refer to?

A: This is my own term for a de facto state of affairs. The ancient Chinese once said that the Emperor obviously held the "Mandate of Heaven" to retain his throne as long as all was well with the country. If things were not going well, it would be assumed that the Mandate had been lost, and thus it became acceptable to replace the emperor without insulting the throne or the country. As I employ the term, the "Infernal Mandate" is carried by whoever best represents the true Will of the Prince of Darkness at a given point in time. The new organization will be designed so that it will be possible to reassign this Mandate where it is believed appropriate without scrapping the entire organizational machinery.

Q: Do you think you personally hold this Mandate right now?

A: Yes, both de facto and because of the results of a series of ceremonial workings I have undertaken recently. I will discuss the latter with you in an appropriate fashion as soon as possible.

Q: How soon before the new organization begins to function?

A: It is functioning right now in everything except in name. Once that is protected, cards, certificates, insignia, etc. will be prepared and made available. I will keep you up-to-date on all facts and figures.

Q: Do you regret what you said in the Satanic Bible introduction? Do you plan to write a "new" Satanic Bible?

A: No, I don't regret or retract what I said, and I don't consider it possible to "replace" the Satanic Bible. I will write and issue publications within the new organization as necessary and desirable from the point of view of all concerned. All internal publications will not be made available to the public at large.

Q: Do you intend to say anything to the public press?

A: No, I see no purpose to be served by press coverage of the sort that the Church of Satan received. As an organization we may issue press releases as we deem fit, but no non-members of any sort may participate in our gatherings unless they have already filed applications to affiliate with us. We are through being entertainment for the masses. We will grow through our own efforts, as well as through the efforts of sincere individuals to search us out.

Rege Satanas

Michael A. Aquino
Magister Templi IV°
High Priest and Exarch of Hell

Post Office Box #243
Santa Barbara, California 93102
July 1, X

To all Active recipients of the May-June Cloven Hoof:

I see that an insert has been placed in all copies of this issue suggesting that I am the victim of "personal pressures" which have presumably affected my objectivity, and further stating that the "established philosophy, tenets, and degree system" are unchanged in essence and legitimate in authority.

I am undergoing no "personal pressures", and I consider such an allegation in exceedingly disgusting taste. As for the decision to accept cash or material contributions for the degrees, it was made by Anton and Diane LaVey during the month of May. Complete documentary evidence of this - including letters bearing the signatures of both Anton and Diane LaVey - is now in the possession of every functioning official of the entire Church of Satan. Most of these officials have already resigned from the Church, but I think they will be frank with you should you desire to question them. Provided with this letter are the names and addresses of those officials who have endorsed my interpretation of the situation. Together they constitute practically the entire Church of Satan administrative network across the United States and Canada.

During the past several weeks I have received a deluge of communications from officials and members of the Church who have resigned their membership and are interested in participating in a new organization to preserve the true ideals of the Prince of Darkness. From the size and strength of this reaction, I am of the opinion that the Church of Satan is effectively at an end, though an effort is being made via the Hoof to imply that the status quo is undisturbed.

Those of us who reject the notion that the degrees can be conferred on any other basis than demonstrated personal achievement are now forming a new organization together. It is called the Temple of Set, and it is being incorporated in California as a non-profit religious society. If you are interested in finding out more about it, you are welcome to write to: Mr. William F. Murray; Executive Director; 45 West Sixth Street; Winnemucca, Nevada 89445. Since we are still in the process of compiling and printing our informational and membership forms, it may be a few weeks before you receive them. But we shall do our best to get them on the way as soon as possible.

I realize that many of you are somewhat isolated from the Church of Satan's internal communications channels, and that you thus know little about either me or any other field official. Accordingly I enclose a personal data sheet.

Whatever your decision, my best wishes to you.

Sincerely,

Michael A. Aquino

Dear Friend,

Thank you for your letter in response to my June 10 communique. So much is happening right now that I am unable to answer all the letters that have come in individually. Rather than keep you waiting, I am sending this general letter. What it lacks in the personal touch I hope it compensates for in terms of information.

First, a little more background: During the latter part of May Anton Szandor LaVey informed me of his decision to sell the Satanic degrees via an article destined for the *Hoof*. I stated my objections to this privately to him, but he remained firm. Thus on June 10 I sent all Active members of the Church of Satan the letter that you received. IV°, III°, and select II° officials around the United States and Canada received the same letter, together with a packet of Xeroxed correspondence between myself and the LaVeys as evidence of how the situation developed.

In my final letter to Anton LaVey, I severed my connections with the Church of Satan. I did not resign the IV°; rather I invoked the name of the Prince of Darkness and stripped Anton LaVey and Diane LaVey of their right to the offices of High Priest and High Priestess. Simultaneously I invalidated the Infernal Mandate of the Church of Satan and so removed its authority to confer the true Satanic degrees. Having chosen to speak on behalf of the Mandate, I assumed the High Priesthood as I believed to be the Will of Satan.

During the weeks that followed, I have received endorsements of my actions from virtually every functioning official of the Church of Satan. Like myself, they expressed shock and sadness at LaVey's decision to corrupt the Church. But, when it came to a choice between loyalty to Anton LaVey and loyalty to Satan himself, they chose Satan.

Subsequently, in a series of letters to these officials, I explained what I thought were the in-depth reasons for the final corruption of the Church of Satan. I then outlined plans for a new organization to carry on the true standards of the Prince of Darkness. It will be incorporated as a non-profit religious society in the state of California, and it will operate on a multi-national level. It will encourage communication and interaction between members, and its administrative machinery will be open and aboveboard. This proposition has been well-received to date.

There remained one element conspicuous for its absence - a firm and explicit indication of the Will of Satan himself. It was inconceivable to me that events of this seriousness could occur haphazardly. The magical and philosophical foundations of the Church of Satan were too strong to be shattered without the personal intervention of the Prince of Darkness. And for Satan to acquiesce in the downfall of his own Church seemed thoroughly mystifying to me. The same held true for the decisions and actions of Anton LaVey, a Magus V° and a man of sound constitution and proven judgment. So, on the eve of the Summer Solstice, I exercised my right as a Magister Templi and evoked the Prince of Darkness himself.

The answer came in the form of a document entitled The Book of Coming Forth by Night. I have not yet had time to consider or evaluate the entire implications of this text, but certain points bear immediate mention. The Age of Satan is identified as being a transition phase between two magical Aeons, and the tenth Solstice marked the inception of the Aeon of Set (identified in the Book of Coming Forth by Night as the true "Satan"). By the Will of Set I am to assume the degree of Magus of this Aeon, reconsecrate the rightful Priesthood and Order of Set, and declare the Word of the Aeon - Xeper (pronounced "Kheper" - the ancient Egyptian word for to be/to become/to come into Being).

On June 23 I had a limited number of copies of the Book of Coming Forth by Night reproduced and bound, and that same day I sent these copies to the aforementioned officials who had received my previous packets and communiques. I accept the authenticity of the document, and I shall base the design and impetus of the new organization on its admonitions. There is nothing in the Book of Coming Forth by Night that conflicts with the strict ethical guidelines and open atmosphere I had previously outlined for the organization. If anything, these points are reinforced.

Approval of the new organization's incorporation is expected momentarily from the California Secretary of State, and then I shall be able to tell you the precise name. I shall try to get as much information out to you as quickly as I can, so please bear with me.

Many of you in your letters told me that, after joining the Church of Satan, you had been completely ignored by the Central Grotto and cut off from any channels of communication to regional officials of the Church. So the first thing to do is to put you in touch with an official in your own area. He or she will be able to keep you up-to-date on initial developments regarding the new organization, provide additional perspective, and, ultimately, serve as a source of guidance for you if you desire to improve and increase your magical and philosophical acumen. Enclosed with this letter is a list of officials who have endorsed my actions to date. Most have also indicated their willingness to work with me in the new organization as well, but some are still thinking it over. You are welcome to contact one or more of these officials, but please respect the pressures on their time too right now. They are all experienced and capable, and I am certain they will answer you as soon as they possibly can. So that we don't get into a vicious circle of correspondence-duplication, please contact only the official nearest you for the time being. If you don't receive an answer in a reasonable period of time, you can assume that that individual is probably swamped at the moment. In that case, check with the next nearest one. You are welcome to send copies of your letters to my address [P.O. Box #243; Santa Barbara, CA 93102] if you so desire. I would like to look over your ideas and desires, for they will give me all the more information on how best to construct the new organization.

Some of you told me that you had received no reply to letters sent to the Editor of the old Cloven Hoof c/o the San Francisco address during the last couple of years. I should like you to know that letters sent to that address were apparently not forwarded to me in Santa Barbara. I make it a point to either answer a letter personally or forward it to someone who can.

One or two preliminary points about the new organization: Its emblem, in accordance with the Book of Coming Forth by Night, will be the inverse pentagram without the goat or Hebrew letters. It will incorporate five magical degrees: Setian I°, Adept II°, Priest/Priestess of Set III°, Magister/Magistra Templi IV°, and Magus V°. Scope of the degrees will be generally the same as indicated in the March/April X Cloven Hoof, expanded and strengthened in accordance with the open-communication atmosphere of the new organization. Medallions will be similar to the Baphomets of the old Church of Satan, but will incorporate only the pentagram (see emblem atop first page of this letter). Colors: I° white, II° red, III° black, IV° blue, V° purple.

Final authority in the new organization will rest with a Council of Nine, which will be empowered to assign and/or remove the High Priesthood in accordance with the Mandate of Set. While in office, the High Priest will have complete authority to direct the affairs of the organization, short of altering the powers or constitution of the Nine. The High Priest will initially approve all elevations to I°, II°, and III°. Later on authority to confer both I° and II° will be extended to III° officials. The High Priest alone may nominate III° officials for elevation to the IV°, but all such nominations will require approval of a majority of the Council.

As for the V°, it is not limited to one individual within the Aeon. In keeping with the Will of Set, the High Priest will be empowered to nominate IV° individuals who appear to exemplify the characteristics of this degree. All such nominations will require unanimous approval by the Council of Nine. All degree elevations, by their intrinsic nature, will be permanent, even if the individual should subsequently cease Active status. A degree may be renounced only by the individual himself, and his reasons will again require subsequent endorsement [in the case of III°+] by the Council of Nine.

A monthly newsletter, The Scroll of Set, will be published. Like the old Hoof, it will be fairly simple in format and conversational in tone. But it will also be more frank, and it will augment and encourage more elaborate publications on a regional and multi-regional level.

That's about it for the time being. I welcome your comments and suggestions about all of this. It is my desire to construct organizational machinery which truly reflects both the Will of Set and the Will of all Setians.

Oh, yes - Some of you have asked for some information about me personally. I am not inclined to blow my own horn, and thus relatively little about me has circulated around the Church of Satan over the years in print. I will try to get out a resume and a photo in the near future. Not very flashy, but it will give you the essentials.

Thank you again for your interest and encouragement, and I look forward to making - or renewing - your personal acquaintance as soon as possible.

Xeper.

Michael Aquino

Michael A. Aquino
Magus V°
High Priest of Set

June 26, X

Enc.

Endorsements to date from the following officials:

Adept Tom Bari
P.O. Box #205
Mount Ephraim, New Jersey 08059

Adept Ronald K. Barrett
P.O. Box #11149
San Francisco, California 94101

Priest Robert J. DeCecco
P.O. Box #2113
Framingham, Massachusetts 01701

Priest Robert Ethel
P.O. Box #3280
Falls Church, Virginia 22043

Priest Michael A. Grumboski
2831 Ewald Circle
Detroit, Michigan 48238

Adept Thomas S. Huddleston
19 Plaza Drive
Mount Vernon, Ohio 43050

Adept William F. Murray
45 West Sixth Street
Winnemucca, Nevada 89445

Adept Stuart Munro
230 Glouster Street #811
Ottawa, Ontario
Canada K2P-0A9

Priest Michael L. McQuown
134 Franklin Avenue
Staten Island, New York 10301

Adept Lynn A. Norton
520 West Ganson Street #1
Jackson, Michigan 49201

Priest L. Dale Seago
1440 Twenty-Third Street #107
Santa Monica, California 90404

Priestess Lilith Sinclair
P.O. Box #3
Summerland, California 93067

Priestess Margaret A. Wendall
P.O. Box #4286
San Jose, California 95126

Adept Arthur R. Zabrecky
P.O. Box #8652
Cleveland, Ohio 44135

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Temple of Set

Tomb It May Concern:

Several of you have brought to my attention a little gem entitled "Hoisted by His Own Patois". This letter [a copy of which was not sent directly to me] is Anton LaVey's response to my recent communiques regarding the corruption of the Church of Satan and the creation of a new organization in its place. Dr. LaVey, incidentally, has received copies of all these communiques directly from me.

"Hoisted by His Own Patois" is factually inaccurate and quite insulting in tone. I had half-expected something like this, as I intimated in my June 16 letter to you. And, as I said I would, I will now clarify the factual points and disregard the tone.

Power corrupts, and absolute power corrupts absolutely. Dr. LaVey is correct in saying that I declined to subordinate my own common sense to his efforts to exploit the Church of Satan and its degree system. Hence I reproached his authoritarian attitude and refusal to respect the standards of ethics advertised by the Church over these many years. In the new organization [to be called the Temple of Set] the High Priest will not be in a position to abuse his office. Final authority will rest with a Council of Nine, of which the High Priest will not be a member. And administrative matters of the Temple will be overseen by an Executive Director also appointed by the Nine. The interrelationship between the Council, the High Priest, and the Executive Director will be one of cooperation, but it will also contain mutual checks and balances to safeguard the organization against the fate of the Church of Satan. All of this will be written into the Articles of Incorporation and By-Laws, copies of which will be sent to you as soon as the drafts are ready.

Anton LaVey then asserts that he never claimed to hold anything resembling an "Infernal Mandate" and that he regards his titles as High Priest and Exarch of Hell as symbolic and not literal. Taken at face value, such a statement would indicate that the Church of Satan and the Satanic Bible were nothing more than an elaborate con game in which LaVey exploited the name, imagery, and heritage of the Prince of Darkness. But I think his statement is not a true reflection of his actual feelings. For years Anton LaVey has spoken and written of the Prince of Darkness as an intelligent entity - not necessarily anthropomorphic, but quite real. This conviction of his is quite evident in both the Satanic Bible and many other documents of record. If he seeks now to pretend that he never meant any of it, it is probably because that is the only way he could hope to excuse his betrayal of that entity.

There was nothing supernatural in the Church of Satan, and there will be nothing supernatural in the Temple of Set. The Church of Satan did concern itself with experimentation in both formal and informal magic - being metaphysical assumptions and philosophical hypotheses for which there are not yet demonstrable scientific laws. The Temple of Set will carry this forward, because it is interesting, stimulating, educational, and just plain fun to do so.

I am next accused of "trying to mislead you in accordance with my own rigidly fixed moral code". It is true that I set great store by my personal integrity, but it is not true that my understanding of ethics is rigidly fixed. Throughout life we are constantly confronted by new information which expands our perspective and frequently necessitates an "updating" of personal philosophy. As for "misleading" recipients of the packets, I think that the contents and cover letter of those packets speak for themselves.

The next paragraph of Dr. LaVey's letter is as follows:

> "Judging from initial response to Mr. Aquino's packet, the vast majority of recipients have reaffirmed their alliance with the Church of Satan. Response has been most gratifying and will not be forgotten. His behavior has been described by communicants as: "petty", "priggish", "raging", "puritanical", "bitchy", "disgusting", "foppish", "overbearing","unimaginative", "lacking perception", "autistic", etc. - the list is long and varied, but unanimous on certain points."

The packets were sent to all of the officials listed in the enclosure to my June 26 letter, plus Dr. & Mrs. LaVey, Magister John Ferro, Magister Adrian-Claude Frazier, Reverend Stephen Hollander, Reverend Stuart Levine, Warlock William R. Payne, Reverend & Mrs. James Stowe, and Reverend & Mrs. Paul Pipkin. To date I have received no responses from any of these people indicating the slightest dissatisfaction with my actions or decisions - save from Anton LaVey and Paul Pipkin, both of whom have commented upon my personality rather than upon the actual issue raised.

Since Dr. LaVey does not get around to identifying the individuals comprising that "vast majority" of his, I confess myself somewhat suspicious of his mathematics. Perhaps he ran off a few dozen more copies of that packet and sent them off to officials of whom I have never heard ...? In any event, this mystery is easily resolved. Simply talk to one another, and you will discover who thinks what. Q.E.D.

Anton LaVey next expresses increasing dissatisfaction with the Cloven Hoof, saying that only his frequent intervention salvaged it from Editorial abuse. If in fact he was dissatisfied with the Hoof, he certainly did a good job of concealing it from me. In leafing through letters from him and Diane following each issue, I find nothing but compliments. And, as for his "instructions to print items which I subsequently altered in both content and meaning", that's not quite accurate. Since I was first invited to edit the Hoof back in Louisville, I have received almost no input from San Francisco save the Anton LaVey essay. Such alterations as I did make in material not written by me were limited to the unsplitting of infinitives, the correction of grammar/spelling/punctuation, and the occasional deletion of something which I thought the readership might find offensive or undignified.

With only one or two exceptions, each issue of the Hoof was typed in final camera copy by me in Santa Barbara and forwarded to 6114 prior to the turn of the month in question. Delays in the distribution of each issue were due to printing and mailing procedures in San Francisco. When any issue of the Hoof was returned to me for changes of any sort, a new camera copy was in the mail within 24 hours.

As a matter of fact I am adding a few more certificates to my wall full of them right now - a Master's degree in Political Science from the University of California, a diploma of graduation from the Officer's Advanced Course of the U.S. Army Armor School at Fort Knox, and a certificate of appreciation just received from the National Council of the Boy Scouts of America. Those who have seen my study know that my IV° certificate from Dr. LaVey occupies a place of prominence above and apart from the other 31 documents. I was quite satisfied with the IV° and in fact had just taken delivery on some fancy IV° stationery at a rather hefty price when this situation developed.

Apart from Tony, I am aware of two other individuals who received the blue Baphomet - John Ferro of San Francisco and Adrian-Claude Frazier of Denver. I have always maintained friendly relations with both of them, as their letters to me and mine to them evidence. I seem to recall that I also pestered Anton and Diane unmercifully for months to get them to restore John Ferro's IV°, which had been invalidated following the cessation of group activities at 6114 some years ago. In short, I encourage the titular recognition of those who deserve it, but I was and still am opposed to the bestowing of degrees for any other reason than demonstrated competence.

Upon my elevation to the III° in June of V, I was informed by Anton LaVey that I was to consider myself a member of the Council of Nine. Subsequently I was presented with the special medallion bearing the trapezoid/pentagram/trident seal of that body. Subsequently I attended occasional meetings at 6114 with Magister Ferro, the LaVeys, and other ladies and gentlemen who certainly talked as though they were the Council of Nine. If all this was an elaborate show for my benefit, then I can only compliment Anton and Diane for the elaborate rehearsing of roles and lines that was obviously required. And, if there is another Council of Nine lurking in the shadows somewhere, I can only observe that it hasn't done any of us much good!

From the letters and face-to-face comments I have been getting from many of you during these last couple of weeks, it does indeed appear that I was getting cut off from certain Church developments. Mail sent to me c/o San Francisco was not forwarded if the contents disturbed the status quo, and both officials and members of the Church were constantly discouraged from writing to me by "Lana Green" and "John Kincaid". Now a whole lot of facts are coming out in the wash, and I continue to be amazed at some of the things that have been going on.

My mailing list is hardly fractional: Since November of VI I have maintained and updated the entire Hoof mailing list, for the simple reason that it had previously been in such a mess that 6114 was inundated with requests for missed issues, repeated address changes, repeated renewals, and new memberships not included on the list. If you were a member back in those grand old days, you probably remember the fun - particularly if you were a Grotto Leader!

Furthermore, whoever was in charge of "keeping my list fractional for security reasons" did a pretty rotten job of it. Included on the list, as I mentioned in my 6/10 letter to the LaVeys, are a flock of the LaVeys' personal friends and publishing correspondents and Hollywood jet-setters. If I had indeed gone bananas and set out to ruin Anton LaVey, I wouldn't have missed the chance to send Diane's 6/4 letter to such people. How do you think some of the Beverly Hills gang would react to a scheme to milk them by selling them degrees? Probably not too enthusiastically. But I have not done so, I do not intend to do so, and I don't want any of you to do so. It will help nothing at this point, and it would only hurt the LaVeys. We concentrate only on cleaning our own house, right?

Yes, I am opposed to material contributions as qualification for degrees. I have set forth my reasoning in the letters included in my packet, and I don't think I need to go over it again. To say that buying a degree is an alternative to earning one is, to my way of thinking, worse than scrapping individual accomplishment altogether and redesignating the degrees as simply a money-making gimmick. As Diane so accurately points out in her 6/4 letter, it is precisely because the degrees have always symbolized personal prowess that they are desirable.

As for the Church of Satan's "progressing according to plan (including schism)", all I can say is that it must be some wild sort of plan indeed, involving the destruction of the Church of Satan, the discrediting of its High Priest, and a great deal of unhappiness and disillusionment among all of its officials and members. And why? Because of a stupid scheme to make a fast buck that would not have succeeded even if it had been implemented. Some plan indeed.

And finally, Dr. LaVey - for you are getting a copy of this too - you have some gall to say that you will nurture "hard feelings" against those who have trusted you and followed you for years, only to find their achievements prostituted for a financial stunt. Rather you should count yourself lucky that we are trying to approach the situation constructively, set this incident to rest as gently as possible, and think of you in terms of the many positive achievements you have authored. If you can't help us, then I suggest you leave us alone until a future time when old wounds will not seem so painful. Perhaps then we may work together once again, as I believe the Prince of Darkness would prefer.

Xeper.

Michael A. Aquino
Magus V°
High Priest of Set

Michael A. Aquino

To: The Magistri
The Priesthood of Mendes
Elect of the II°

Enclosed in chronological order is a series of documents, commencing with an article sent to me last month by Dr. and Mrs. LaVey for inclusion in the May-June X issue of the Cloven Hoof. It is followed by my own draft of the first two pages of that issue, which I had submitted as a replacement for the LaVey text.

This in turn is followed by a series of subsequent letters between the LaVeys and myself. I think they will be self-explanatory.

I do this to fulfill my oath to Satan and my obligation to you. I have no objection to your discussing this material among one another if you desire to do so. Whether you discuss it with the LaVeys is entirely your decision.

If you believe that I have acted in accordance with the true Will of Our Lord Satan, I will await your word to that effect.

Rege Satanas!

Michael Aquino

June 10, X

Church of Satan

Post Office Box 243
Santa Barbara, Calif. 93102

June 10, X

To all members of the Church of Satan:

Since November of the year VI I have had the privilege of speaking with you as Editor of The Cloven Hoof and author of all unsigned material appearing in that publication.

Over my objections an article is scheduled to appear in the May-June X Hoof announcing that financial and material contributions to the Central Grotto will henceforth be considered "qualification for elevation to the II° and III°". Whether the article will in fact appear after this letter of mine becomes known is open to question. But the decision has been made.

It is my firm conviction that the Satanic degrees cannot and should not be sold, no matter how helpful the cash contribution involved may be to the Church of Satan. Since the founding of the Church, elevation to all of the degrees has been only through personal intelligence, dedication, and accomplishment. I believe those to be the proper criteria.

Effective prior to the May-June issue, I resign the Editorship of the Cloven Hoof. I further sever my connections with the Church of Satan as an organization, since it no longer carries the true sanction of the Prince of Darkness.

If you desire to communicate with me, I may be reached at the above address, which now becomes a non-Church of Satan address.

Thank you, and my best wishes to all of you. ψ DIABOLUS VOBISCUM ψ

Rege Satanas!

Michael A. Aquino
Magister Templi IV°

NCLUDE IN HOOF LEAD ARTICLE

(Note: Begin this lead article with a qualifier to the effect that we received so much mail on the last issue -- questions on the second and third degrees, how to contact Regional Agents, how to get the mailing address (and costs) of regional newsletters, etc. You know, what you and Anton discussed when you were here.)

As you will recall, the following is to be used almost verbatim, any changes making it stronger if anything

Advancement to the II° (Witch or Warlock) is attained by one of two means: appointment or application. One is appointed through recognition of prowess or contribution to the best interests of the Church of Satan. In this category are to be found persons recognized as authorities or leaders in their fields. Their recognition must exceed self-evaluation and be evidenced by popular acclaim or public notice (via media) of their achievements. In short, persons of note whose affiliation with the Church can exert a strong influence over others, either publicly or among their peers. This prerequisite applies to the III° as well.

Also eligible for advancement through appointment are those who have made a tangible and viable contribution to the expansion and development of the Church. This does not apply on a grotto or regional level, for each member so involved is expected to share in the operation of any social faction within which he functions. Despite inaccurate reports and misquotes, the Church of Satan not only accepts material contributions, but returns recognition for those acts commensurate with their magnitude. To operate in any other fashion would be ungrateful, hypocritical, and just plain foolish. Therefore, professional services, funds, real estate, objects of value, etc., which contribute to the tangible, worldly success of the Church of Satan are qualification for elevation to both II° and III°. The churches of the godly may not have lived by bread along, but they've grabbed more than their share of dough over the years. The frankly materialistic concept of Satanism can always use a little bread or its equivalent.

It would be not only unSatanic but contradictory to the teachings of our leader not to mention the act of "pleasing the boss" as an opportunity for advancement to any higher degree within the Organization. Anton La Vey is notoriously Diabolical (to those who know him) in his response to and recognition of his more pleasing advocates. Nuff said...

Elevation to the II° may be attained, as an alternative to the foregoing, through application and evaluation of a specially prepared test, designed to elicit a wide variety of responses. As in the the past, the processing fee for the II° test is $20.00, though the entire format of the test has been changed. The $20.00 processing fee barely keeps the examiners in Beluga caviar and Stolichnaya vodka. while they are processing.

We will leave it up to you to diplomatically tell them that they do not automatically get put in touch with their RA, and, of course, info on regional newsletters would also come after having them prove themselves worthy of further contacts. But something must be said in this regard, because we are swamped with letters asking for contacts.

[First page of letter to Dr. & Mrs. LaVey from Michael A. Aquino dated May 25, X]

Dear Diane and Dr. LaVey,

Under separate cover cometh ye Hoofe. Instead of making the lead article [illegible] I went ahead and made it a whole lot stronger. Anyone who [illegible] can't be reached by anything short of a whack on [illegible] by mail.

[First page of letter to Dr. & Mrs. LaVey from Michael A. Aquino
dated May 25, X]

Dear Diane and Dr. LaVey,

Under separate cover cometh ye Hoofe. Instead of making the lead article a little stronger, I went ahead and made it a whole lot stronger. Anyone who fails to get the message now can't be reached by anything short of a whack on the skull with a 2x4, which is impractical by mail.

I also expanded and strengthened the case for contributions to the Church, wording the appeal towards those in a position to come up with good-sized hunks of money. Hence all the harping on taxes. The information in the article conforms to general I.R.S. policy. The Church of Satan's I.R.S. standing is not germaine to the matter.

Let's take an example: If Satanist John Jones sends the Church of Satan a check for $1,000, he can deduct that as a contribution to his church. [I.R.S. forms, by the way, do not even ask the name of the church.] If the Church of Satan is set up with the I.R.S. as a tax-exempt religious organization, you would pay no income taxes on that $1,000. If the Church of Satan is not certified that way with the I.R.S., you would pay regular income taxes on the $1,000. But this does not affect Jones' tax reporting.

There are many ways in which cash and assets may be donated to a church for tax benefits and shelters. Your accountant should get cracking and work up a summary for you to provide persons who inquire about making contributions. The Hoof should also get the word around. A "charitable remainder trust" is one such way. If your accountant doesn't know what I'm talking about, see another accountant!

I've purposely left the Church of Satan's form of gratitude for contributions open. This enables you to negotiate and/or tailor responses as you deem appropriate.

Since the Church of Satan has so many other ways to thank people for contributions, let's not "sell" our degrees. The symbolism and image of the degrees is sacred to those who presently hold them, and a price could never be set upon them. To do so would be to lose the lifeblood of the Church as an institution destined to revolutionize human history. We have the ignoble fate of Crowley's organizations as a case in point.

the cloven hoof

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À Bon Chat, Bon Rat

Evidently we led with our chin last issue, because the Central Grotto has since received a ton and a half of mail from (a) Satanists wishing to become Warlocks and Witches, (b) Warlocks and Witches wishing to become Priests and Priestesses, (c) new members desiring the addresses of Regional Agents, and (d) inquiries about local and regional newsletters. Instead of answering all these individually, we've decided to use the *Hoof*.

First some comments concerning the II°: Basically there are two types of individuals who express an interest in this degree - those who have *de facto* qualified for it and wish formal recognition of that fact, and those who have not so qualified but wish to undertake tasks and/or tests that will earn them the elevation. Where we got into trouble last issue was in inviting each new Satanist to assess himself. *All* Satanists [not excluding your worthy Editor] are unusually prone to self-magnification, i.e. conceit. Nothing wrong with this *per se*; it's a healthy vice which will goad you into increasingly-ambitious pursuits. But the degree system of the Church of Satan would make no sense at all unless the degrees are keyed to your skills and accomplishments *as they impact the environment in which you have chosen to operate*. This is extremely important. The adept Satanist is one who *succeeds in translating his ideal image of himself into objective reality*, not a starry-eyed introvert who recedes into megalomaniac daydreams. *Here we are diametrically opposed to "white-light" occultism*. If you think that you deserve recognition as a *de facto* II°, then we want evidence of the influence and expertise you have developed. This may be in the form of professional standing, academic degrees, military rank, awards, offices held, media coverage, writings published, awards received, membership in exclusive groups, etc. Those Satanists selected for the II° on *our* initiative are big enough shots so that we don't even have to go out of our way to see their impact on society. Get the picture?

Now let us suppose that you're a nice person who hasn't done much of anything yet, but who wants the Church of Satan to teach you "how to dance". Fine - as long as we both understand that. [Because we've had our fill of novices whom we have nurtured, only to see them disavow and then attack the hand that's fed them.] The rules of the game are all there - in the *Satanic Bible, Satanic Rituals, Compleat Witch,* and this notable newsletter. So the *best* way for you to proceed is to pull up your socks and begin to make an impression on whatever sphere of influence you have chosen. We never said that it was a piece of cake - just that it *can* be done according to the guidelines we have set forth. But you can't sit around on your ass and expect the world to come to you. Two years ago Dr. LaVey told you in *Hoof* #V-4 to get out and read Nathaniel West's *A Cool Million*. 75% of you didn't do it. 20% did, but let it go at that. The remaining 5% both read the book and put the book, the author, and the concepts to use ... which is why they are riding the crest of the current 1890-1930 nostalgia boom, including the filming of West's *The Day of the Locust*. After you have taken a given ball and run with it, *then* come back and talk to us about the II° - even if, for one reason or another, you were *not* successful in attaining all you set out to. We are as interested in methodology as in ends. And so is the Devil.

If you think that you are *de facto* II° material but do not possess independent evidence to substantiate same, we have provided a means whereby the Church will examine and evaluate you. This is in the form of an open-ended, written examination. It is entirely new and bears no resemblance to the old, fixed-answer II° test used in Phases II & III. If you desire to attempt it, we have set the processing fee at $20.

Everything we have said concerning the II° goes for the III° in spades. Do not make the mistake of considering the III° as merely a sinister counterpart to the philistine crew you see holding conventional religious ordinations. [*They* are ordained because, among other things, they can be relied upon *not* to exercise their grey matter!] It is technically possible for a Satanist to obtain the III° and higher without having passed through the II°. But, if you will think about it for a moment, it is highly improbable that a person qualified for Satanic ordination would not have received prior evaluation and recognition as a II°. The exceptions, when they do occur, involve individuals of extraordinary merit and potential who enter the sphere of influence of the Church of Satan at short notice. A glance through the pages of *The Devil's Avenger* will give you ample examples of this.

Now for a word or two about Regional Agents: Phase III of the Church's Master Plan [June VI to August IX] involved the rapid decentralization of many of our administrative and operational functions to the network of III° and II° officials that had been carefully organized around the planet during Phase II. What we failed to anticipate was that the Church membership would then grow at such a swift rate that those ladies and gentlemen who had volunteered and been selected to serve as Regional Agents were, in a word, swamped. Worse than that, they were swamped for the wrong reason: People would join the Church, write to their Agents, squat back on their haunches, and await stimulation/entertainment. To put it mildly, our Agents didn't appreciate this. Under the current Phase IV, therefore, the Central Grotto does not put new members in touch with Agents and/or Grotto Leaders until it sees at least *some* evidence that the new member will contribute as much to such a contact as he or she will extract from it. This, we feel, is not at all unreasonable. Just let us know what you're doing, and we'll initiate a link-up when/if appropriate.

Local and regional newsletters were encouraged to beat the band during Phase III; thus many are doing quite nicely during Phase IV. The only drawback was that too many editors were content to do just that, i.e. collect and print reports of *others'* magical operations to the exclusion of their own. Things began to get a bit ridiculous, as you can imagine, with everyone sitting around waiting for somebody else to do something. Newsletters on the east coast were reporting on the west coast, and virtue-versa. It would have been funny had it not drained so much energy that could and should have been employed positively. So once again in Phase IV we have yanked on the reins. We will put you in touch with one or more such publications when and if we think that you and it/them would *both* benefit. We are not trying to isolate you from what you may consider the "mainstream" of the Church. We *are* ensuring that, when you get there, you don't swim against the current, frustrating your own progress and impeding that of others. If in five years you can honestly say that the Church of Satan hasn't recognized, encouraged, and reinforced your positive efforts and accomplishments, then you can get mad at us. But no one has yet, unless he presumed to pay us in pennies and get change in dollars. There is an old aphorism: *Facilis Descensus Averno*. Don't bet on it.

Backscratching

Evidently there is some confusion about contributions of cash, real estate, etc. to the Church of Satan, because we receive many inquiries about this. Here's our position: The Church both accepts and welcomes all such contributions. The Church as an organization seeks no tax benefits from the government, but we are fully incorporated as a religious institution. Thus, where *your* taxes are concerned, contributions to the Church of Satan qualify as a legitimate deduction. The same holds true for contributions of professional services. A cautionary note: This applies *only* in the case of contributions to the Church as a whole, not to gifts to Grottos or specific Church officials. Therefore all checks and other contributions should be sent directly to the Central Grotto and specifically identified as a contribution for tax purposes. Do not deduct such a contribution until you have received a receipt for same from the Central Grotto. Check with your accountant to see how contributions affect your tax position.

Where does the "backscratching" come in? In other religious societies you can expect nothing but personal satisfaction and, possibly, tax advantages from donations. We are different. If you go out of your way to help us [regardless of tax benefits to you], you can expect the Church of Satan to go out of its way to show appreciation. In each case we will tailor our response to its most appropriate form. You would be surprised at the variety of ways open to us. The point is that we do not forget our friends. And, when asked for attention, favors, or assistance, we are inclined to give priority to those who have given of themselves to us. Simple as that.

[Exact copy of letter to Anton Szandor LaVey from Michael A. Aquino]

Dear Sir:

I know that you have good reasons for your decisions. Otherwise I would not have devoted the last six years to the Church of Satan. Yet, if you told me to blow your head off with a shotgun, I wouldn't do it. And that original Hoof article of yours would undermine the entire substance of the Church. Any advisor of yours who says that it will not is either a fool or a "yes-man" afraid to speak openly in your presence.

The people who will establish the Church of Satan as a great and lasting institution are those who believe in it and in the philosophy behind it. They have understood for years that the degrees all signify personal intelligence, dedication, and accomplishment. If you now state that material contributions "are qualification for elevation to both II° and III°", they will feel betrayed. Those with a strong sense of self-respect could not retain their degrees or membership under such circumstances. Any persons who remained would be boot-lickers who care nothing for the ideals of Satanism as long as they can curry your personal favor.

It is a mistake to think that you will attract contributions by selling the degrees of the Church. People donate funds to organizations whose principles they admire. They won't give a cent to a church known to pawn its priesthood and initiatory degrees.

If the Church of Satan needs money, there are many ways we can go about it without prostituting ourselves. We might hold membership drives, increase membership and renewal fees, ask for contributions via the Hoof, hold raffles, sell a variety of decorative items, etc. I will be happy to work out some plans along these lines and follow through with them for you.

If a big shot approaches the Church with a sizable contribution, we can take him to dinner, give him an honor guard, present him with a cape & sword & plumed hat, and dub him a Grand Knight Commander of the Legion of Honor of the Infernal Empire, First Class. And he'll be far more impressed than he would have been had he received a black or white or blue Baphomet.

As for the comment about "pleasing the boss", our people believe that they are doing precisely that by living and promoting the philosophy you have authored and championed. It is slow, hard, and occasionally dangerous work. You live behind a protective fence in San Francisco, but announced Satanic officials around the country can't take such precautions. Yet even so they are pleased and proud if you gain additional fame and fortune at least partly through their efforts. These efforts are forthcoming because you are respected as a man of principle who has taken a final stand against hypocrisy.

So if you show favoritism to courtiers and personality-cult fans, you will not have a true Church of Satan. Instead you will have an Anton LaVey Fan Club composed of the most superficial sort of people. The people who will build the Church of Satan into a great institution will never be found sitting at your feet. They will be too busy putting your ideas to work out in the world. I have already spent a good deal of time, quite possibly without success, trying to defend your gift of the IV° to your family chauffeur to members of the Church who have heard about it. I like Tony personally, but that blue Baphomet has become a slap in the face to some of your most dedicated field members and officials. And not because they themselves don't have it.

It would have been very easy for me to say none of these things, put that original article in the Hoof, and make consoling noises while the Church of Satan blew itself to bits. But I have a higher regard for you than that, and, if that means being the only one to tell you things you don't want to hear, I guess I have to do it. That doesn't mean I enjoy it.

Most respectfully,

/s/ Michael A. Aquino

May 31, X

P.S.: To date the only other person who has seen that original text is Pat (Priestess Lilith Sinclair). I handed it to her without comment to test her reaction. At first she thought it a practical joke, and then she cried for a quarter of an hour. She calmed down only when I said that the text was misleading and intended only to convey the points which I subsequently included in the "Backscratching" article. I have told her nothing further since that time. /s/ MA

THE CHURCH OF SATAN

Post Office Box 7633 * San Francisco, California 94120 * (415) 752-3583

4 June X

Magister Michael A. Aquino
Post Office Box 243
Santa Barbara, California 93102

Dear Mike:

My first question is, why did you not voice any disagreement the night we sat for several hours discussing the new plans and reading you the essay which is identical to the one we sent for inclusion in the *Hoof*? Anton said that it was to be printed exact, except, perhaps, for a word changed here and there to smooth it out. If your objections are as strong as they now appear, it seems inconceivable that they would have not occurred to you during the initial discussion.

Second, why do I get the impression that your latest letter was written, in part, for the eyes and ears of others besides ourselves. On a number of points it raises, you *know* the facts are not as you have presented them. So I feel your subjective reaction to the bluntness of the original draft for the lead essay has colored your feelings about many things, some of which are totally unrelated. I was tempted to answer your didactic letter with a simple one-line note: "If you can't stand the heat ..." (one of your favorite retorts). But I feel you deserve to know our reaction, considering the kinship the three of us have had over the past six years.

I will comment on each of the issues raised by your letter, but first I want to clarify that you certainly are not the "only one to tell you (Anton) things you don't want to hear." *I* have told him many, many things over the past twelve years that he did not want to hear. (That's called criticism.) He has often taken my criticism to heart and acted upon it—as he has yours-even when unsolicited. He has also often hotly rejected my criticism and suggestions and done exactly what he thinks best. I respect him for both responses. His willingness to *listen*, then *accept* or *reject* as he sees fit is indicative of the intelligence and strength that first attracted me to him and makes me continue to love him more each year. I've always had an abhorrence for fraidy cats. I have stuck by him, regardless of whether I strongly disagree with him at times, because I respect and *believe in him.* (That's called loyalty.) And I am not the only one. We are not "yes men" (or "yes women"), because we *do* tell him when we disagree, but his word is the final one, like it or not.

How many friends do you think strongly advised him not to form the Church of Satan? Many. Their reasons? Too commercial. What if he had listened to their accusations of "selling out" or "cheapening" the Black Arts? Anton hates hypocrisy — and that, my dear Brother of the Night, is what the essay is geared ?

to eradicate.

The people who will establish the Church of Satan as a great and lasting institution are those who are realists! That — realism — is the philosophy behind Satanism. How do you know the present II° and III° people will feel betrayed? In this case, I don't think you can cite Pat's reaction, since — comment from you or not — she knows you pretty well, and facial expression can say what no words can. We credit them with more sophistication than you do. It is the very intelligence, dedication, and accomplishment (i.e. life experience), which will enable them to comprehend the reasons for the alternate means of attaining higher degrees within the Church. Why not let the II° and III° people speak for themselves? Ah so,

If a big shot is really a big shot and/or capable of offering the Church a sizable contribution, he has had his fill of fancy dinners, honor guards, and fifteen-word honorary titles. And if our title didn't mean anything to him, he wouldn't be willing to pay for it. (The wealthy are notoriously more tight-fisted than those less well endowed financially.) You know us better than to think we're going to make some blow-hard moron, who doesn't know a Baphomet from a Mogen David, Third Degree. Chances are, we wouldn't even be placed in a position of talking with anyone like that long enough for the subject to come up! We would feel either indifference or contempt, hence nothing could come of such an encounter. San Francisco tried to sweep Anton La Vey up in its big social scene a couple of years after the Church was formed. She failed. Because he couldn't stand being in the same room with most of the socialites he met. And he still can't.

As for prostituting ourselves, we all do it. It's just a matter of semantics and extent. From what you said about your stint at Merrill Lynch I would think you would be the first to recognize that prostitution is necessary sometimes, and that it is only when it becomes all-pervading that our lives go sour. We don't think we're prostituting ourselves ... anymore. When Anton had to pose for Devil-Man pictures and play court jester anytime the press needed something to liven things up a bit, yes. But not anymore. If you regard us as such, then perhaps you can console yourself with the old saw, "This too will pass."

From the very beginning, Anton has placed very little importance on titles. They were created because members demanded them. You know he has more respect for certain I° people than for some III°. He has always been direct with you on this point. Your own title was well earned and stands for exactly what it has been described as standing for. But you should know by now that it is the chemistry between Anton and certain individuals that determines his respect (or lack of it) for them. Call it the roots of a personality cult if you wish, but I think if you consider the matter objectively you will agree that no organization can survive without at least some element of hero-worship. Otherwise, the role of leader would be nonexistent in society. Matter of fact, I have correspondence from you from about a year ago saying that very thing. It was in reference to the Anton La Vey Fan Club business.

I can't believe you are as naive as your statement, "People won't give a cent to a church known to pawn its priesthood and initiatory degrees," makes you appear. What about the Shriners, other branches of Masonry, the Catholic Church and its WASP counterparts? They may not like to admit it to themselves, but down deep they know that, if they don't have the time or inclination to work for positions of esteem in the organization, they can cast their bread and get it back buttered.

Do you truly understand the "Circus of Dr. La Vey". You certainly described it well in the Chronicles. We always thought you knew the rigging, but your last letter shows signs of a loosening of the ropes. Apollonius spoke and you reacted like one of the rubes. We have never misled you. And this latest essay is just the same thing you've been hearing all along with the sham stripped away. Our ideals are no different than they ever were. Methods change from time to time, but the goals remain the same.

Your comment about our living behind a protective fence was ill-timed, considering that just last night I was shot at through the front window at 6114. It was only a pellet gun, but came through the window and shade at a velocity sufficient to embed itself in the ceiling diagonally above me. In measuring the line of fire, had I been seated at my desk (from which I had a split-second before stood up), I would have been in real trouble. You see, therefore, why this is a particularly touchy subject today, even though the perpetrators were apprehended six blocks away.

Why can't announced officials around the country take such precautions? Last I heard, building materials were still available. And apartment dwellers have a hell of a lot more exterior protection. I think that the truth is, they don't need such precautions. Aside from an occasional annoyance, like a nut call or irate letter or an isolated case of vandalism such as Pat experienced in N.Y., I don't think any of our officials have had to take much abuse. I'm not going to give you a tale of woe, enumerating all the incidents of vandalism and attempts at personal injury directed at us since forming the Church (we've made our own bed), but I do think it is absurd to compare our need for security precautions with that of our officials. Anyone bent on grand-scale violence is going to direct it at the top banana; it's attention-seeking rather than idealism which motivates that sort of person. not necessarily so.

We were foolish in the beginning for announcing the exact location of the Church of Satan and permitting the address to be published. We have since done everything possible to reverse the situation, but people want (need?) to believe that the C/S is still at 6114 California Street. That's why the fence. And that is why we spend as little time as we can in San Francisco. As you know, we have a little place on the Napa/Sonoma County border, and we try to spend more hours there all the time. I love the Old Dark House, which is why I could never completely pull out of it. But I love life and peace of mind too. Our Divert-a-Call machine has allowed us to steal away to our hideout more often in the past year or so. Via the patch line, the phone can be answered there if no one authorized to pick up calls is at 6114.

We have not the slightest difficulty seeing through superficial people, be they self-professed fans or otherwise. If we have no other talent, reading people is one we both have down to an art. So don't worry about any organization, of which Anton would be the central figure, being made up of nothing but superficial people. The only purpose Anton would have in allowing sycophants at sit at his feet is that they'd be in a better position to kick in the teeth! Supportive personalities are not boot-lickers. They are sounding boards, who feed back both encouragement and fresh ideas as an outgrowth of inspiration. They are super-sensitive and intelligent, or else they would be mere sycophants and therefore useless.

We know the difference. Which leads me to Tony.

How dare anyone place you in a position of having to defend Anton's "gift" (no gift, it was earned) of the IV° to Tony. Who are they to set themselves up as judges of the worth of a man who they either don't know or barely know? Have they seen any of his writings, artwork, heard any of his profound observations? Hell no! If Tony wanted to he could be another Eric Hoffer or Jimmy Breslin. And that's no exaggeration. He's rough hewn, yes, but his acumen far exceeds ninety-five percent of our members', officials included. Since when is verbal eloquence and polished bearing a measure of intelligence. I know plenty of vacuous speech-makers and male mannequins who might as well be androids, for all the original thoughts they come up with.

Just don't let us know who considers Tony's blue Baphomet a "slap in the face" if you care for their well-being. And you speak of dedication! Our "dedicated field members and officials" don't know the meaning of the word, compared to Tony. He has gone far beyond the call of duty so many times I can't recall them all. Anyone with half a brain should be ableto discern that Tony is a great deal more than a "family chauffeur". (For the record, he seldom drives for "the family". He is Anton's driver, and mine on occasion.) Tony stands as a shining example of the sort of person you describe as being entitled to the higher degrees. True, he doesn't type letters(although he can type) or conduct grotto activities. But neither is he a celebrity or money-bags. He is not a nebbish, either. For six years he has been Anton's (and mine) most constant personal aide and companion. And since Anton isn't gay and we don't go in for kinky group sex, we must have valid reasons for our regard for Tony. The audacity of anyone questioning them! Do us a favor; don't defend Tony, because he doesn't need it.

Now to Pat's reaction. I am, incidentally, sending her a copy of this letter along with your original, since you have involved her in the matter. It was our understanding that the material slated for the Hoof was to remain confidential until in its final form. That way any possible rough spots that might tend to mislead would be ironed out before anyone read it. But that's okay; I know you and Pat are very close and it's like Anton reading something to me.

As I said, I truly feel that your attitude has colored Pat's, and that the reaction you anticipated from Pat (and others) influenced your response. Be that true or false, I am nevertheless quite surprised at Pat's feelings.

Ask Pat about how she revelled in the role of disciplinarian for the Lilith Grotto and, literally, had a gent or two sitting at her feet during meetings. She and Lana used to giggle over this. Priestess Lilith was given the III° because she was one of the Compleatest Witches we had encountered within the Church. She ruled with an iron hand, extracted assistance and donations from her grotto members as few others could. And they felt nothing but gratitude toward her. The only rumblings that ever occurred were as a result of jealousy on the part of one member over her attentions to another. But she always could regain her balance. They jumped through hoops for her. She milked those who allowed themselves to be milked, and maintained respect for those who didn't but were supportive of her policies. She was a Hellion par excellence. And the East Coast is the poorer for her leaving.

Lilith had the spark it took to keep the Flames burning brightly. So you can see why I find it difficult to picture her breaking down after reading something that was a mere amplification of her own modus operandi. But if you say so...

Since you find this issue of the Hoof too abrasive to your sensibilities, it will go out from here. Some of your text will be retained, but don't worry about having to take the responsibility for the lead essay. Rex Kincaid's byline will be on it.

You have made it clear that you find the current elucidation of policy repugnant. Now we will give the others an opportunity to make their feelings known, pro or con. Any reaction the forthcoming Hoof elicits must be spontaneous. Therefore, please contain your feelings as you have thus far.

Rege Satanas!

Diane

Diane La Vey

Michael A. Aquino

Dear Diane and Dr. LaVey,

This is in answer to your letter of June fourth.

During our meeting in San Francisco I voiced no objections to your proposed Hoof article for three reasons: (1) It was read to me only once and in excerpts, and I did not have the opportunity to examine the text for myself. (2) I was told that it was the gist of an article, and that I would subsequently be able to, as you put it, smooth it out. [That is precisely what I attempted to do in my "Bon Chat" and "Backscratching" substitute articles, because I did not think that it was your intention to sell the degrees. (3) I did not come to 6114 expecting to hear that, and I would have doubted my own hearing had I understood it from the conversation.

My letter of May 31 was written for Anton Szandor LaVey alone. If it seems overly formal in tone, it is perhaps because it was extremely painful for me to write. When I bring up issues as serious as those in the letter, I try to be as precise in what I say as possible. As for the contents, the facts were then and are now exactly as I presented them. Had I been able to place any other interpretation on them, I would have done so.

That Hoof article of yours is not geared to eradicate hypocrisy, but rather to institute it as official policy of the Church of Satan.

Of course Satanists are realists. But to be realistic about life does not mean that one must sacrifice a code of personal integrity. If indeed Anton LaVey once created the degree system without placing importance upon it, it seems that he has changed his mind after seeing that system built into something both important and desirable by those Satanists who have used it to symbolize their standards of integrity and achievement. Evidently it has become so important and desirable that you are determined to sell it, in spite of my offer to pursue alternate and honorable methods of fundraising for the Church.

To argue that you would not sell a degree to anyone not otherwise worthy to hold it is a self-contradictory statement. Any person whose understanding of the Satanic II° or III° is such that he feels justified in assuming same by the mere writing of a check may not be a "blow-hard moron". But he would be unprincipled, contemptuous of the ideals of others, and unconvinced that he could attain the same degree through honest effort on his own part.

true

As for your disavowal of the social limelight, methinks you protest too much. You have both gloried in it, as the constant stream of personal publicity over the past ten years evidences. I find no fault with this and never said that I did. Since you seemed pleased and flattered by it, I have felt all the more happy for you.

No, we do *not* all prostitute ourselves. When a person works for a living, he places *his* time and energy at the disposal of someone who is willing to pay him for doing so. But no one need undertake a line of work that he finds ethically unacceptable. I reject your insinuation that I compromised my own ethics by becoming a Merrill Lynch executive. The stock market is dispassionate towards those who participate in it, but no one is forced to do so. And I have never accepted a client whom I either misled or failed to inform of all applicable risks.

You are right in saying that no organization can prosper without some element of hero-worship. A strong and effective leader is always admired. But that does not justify the replacement of impersonal standards of ethics by the leader's whims, no matter how infallible he may believe himself to be.

Because other churches and religious societies may pawn their principles is no excuse for the Church of Satan doing so. In fact this is exactly why it should *not* do so. The Church of Satan was intended to take a stand against hypocrisy, not join in it.

If this *Hoof* essay of yours is "the same thing I've been hearing all along with the sham stripped away", then apparently I've not seen through that sham for the past six years. It is rather inconsistent for you to precede a statement like that with a comment that you have never misled me.

I have never minimized the risk to your family and yourselves. As you well know, I have constantly reminded others of this, particularly officials of the Church who have thought to enjoy the glamor of their positions while remaining safely away from public scrutiny. But this in no way permits you to downplay the importance of the risk your field officials have assumed. Hard though you may find this to believe, most don't care that much about becoming celebrities, nor did they aspire to their offices with the intention of cashing in on them beyond the modest and appropriate guidelines set forth in the *Articles of Protocol*.

The social risk that *any* Satanist - to say nothing of ordained officials - undertakes is far out of proportion to any glamor he may gain in the community. You are well aware of the many Satanists who have suffered ostracism, job discrimination, family harassment, threats of injury, and personal property damage. The effects have often been felt by spouses and children as well. Yet the two of you have never been resented or blamed for it, because the risks were willingly undertaken as a vote of confidence in you. Far from considering it "absurd" for me to bring this up, you should *never* cease to remember and appreciate it. I am deeply ashamed for you that you do not have the grace to do so.

Nor is it true that the overt violence will be directed only at the "top banana". If a Satanist has been effective in making his beliefs known and his influence felt in any local community, that person will be the one targeted. This too you know well from past case histories.

How "dare" Satanic Priests and Priestesses ask me questions? And I should expect your vengeance to fall upon them should I reveal their names?

Any person whom I accept as a student or recognize as a fellow Satanist may ask me any question whatsoever. And I will answer honestly, if I believe his curiosity genuine and his motives pure. If you confer the IV° on a person who, according to your own statement, does not possess the outward attributes of a Magister Templi, and he himself has not moved to demonstrate his worth to other Satanists with whom he comes into contact, how can you expect honest doubts not to occur?

Your field officials hold their degrees because of skills and accomplishments which are evident throughout the Church. In my opinion a III° or IV° official who neither accepts students nor seeks contact with fellow officials does not know the meaning of a true priesthood per se. I have not defended Tony on the grounds of being able to explain his IV° credentials, because I know nothing of his background. Rather I have said that Anton LaVey would not have conferred the degree had it not been merited. On the whole, questioners have accepted this, but it is an argument based entirely on faith. Since Satanists by their very nature are inclined to accept nothing on faith that reason argues against, there has been a certain gritting of teeth. I do not consider this evidence of weakness on their part, but rather of the store they set by the Satanic Bible's admonishment to "question all things".

For you to say that the judgment of Priestess Lilith ("Pat") was colored by her desire to "please" me, and to say that she ever "milked" her friends and followers in the Lilith Grotto according to the same modus operandi that you now seek to institute is not only untrue, it is thoroughly disgusting.

Finally there is the matter of your instructions to me to keep silent on this entire matter, allowing the policy to go out in the Hoof under another's byline. You do not understand. It is not who says it that makes a difference. It is the fact that it is said at all as a policy of the Church of Satan. Even more than that, it is the fact that Anton Szandor LaVey was the one who thought it up. At this point, even if you now reword the final article in an attempt to restore some of that "sham" you were talking about, it makes no difference at all.

Yes, we will give our II° and III° officials a chance to make their feelings known. And yes, we will let them speak for themselves. But not simply on the basis of whatever you now allow the May-June Hoof to contain. Instead they are going to know the entire story, in your words as well as in mine.

I have sent copies of the enclosed packet of correspondence to all IV°, III°, and II° Satanists who have had sufficient contact with me over the past years to trust the integrity of any organization I endorse. Also enclosed is a copy of the cover letter I am sending to each of them.

It has now been almost four years since I accepted the Editorship of the Cloven Hoof, and you have told me that I am widely - and correctly - known to be the author of all the unsigned material in that newsletter. As Editor I have a personal responsibility to all Satanists who have received the Hoof and trusted in its contents. Therefore I also enclose a letter which I have sent to all members of the Church on the Hoof mailing list. It has not been sent to non-member subscribers, honorary-membership celebrities, or personal friends and relatives of yours who are on the list.

I am disappointed with you beyond expression. Not because you chose to answer my last appeal to you in a way that was rude and contemptuous. Not even because, under the guise of friendship, you have abused and exploited my trust in you. But because you have now acted to deliberately destroy a great institution that would have revolutionized human philosophy and established the name of Anton LaVey as one of the great men of all time. The Church of Satan was the symbol of ultimate honesty in a dishonest world. You founded it, and more than the rest of us you have seen it grow, enduring trial after trial and always emerging stronger and more noble. No one has asked you to sacrifice more of yourselves for it. We have taken pride in building upon the base you forged, raising your Church of Satan by our sweat and always thinking of you while doing so. And now, through some insanity, you have deliberately chosen to deal a death-blow to this wonderful thing - something no one on this world but you could have done. What perverse logic has so distorted your judgment? I am sorry for you, but I cannot excuse you.

I reaffirm my degree as Magister Templi, and I reaffirm the degrees of all those who have won them and honored them according to the standards Satan himself has upheld since the dawn of human civilization. Since you - Satan's High Priest and High Priestess - have presumed to destroy these standards and replace the true Church of Satan with a "Church of Anton", the Infernal Mandate is hereby withdrawn from the organization known as the "Church of Satan, Inc." and you are no longer empowered to execute your offices. The degrees you scorn are no longer yours to administer, but shall be safeguarded according to the Will of Satan. "Whenever, therefore, a lie has built unto itself a throne, let it be assailed without pity and without regret."

Until this time the Church of Satan has rightly affirmed its legitimacy, and those who contest that will find no ally in me. I shall never forget the greatness of its legacy or the incomparable debt all Satanists owe to its founder. And, personally, I shall never cease to love the two of you as gentle and sensitive people whose only fault, perhaps, was in falling victim to pressures no human being should be expected to endure for long. In time I hope you may understand this, and that then you will not think ill of me for what I now do. For so I am bound by my sacred oath to Satan.

Rege Satanas!

Michael A. Aquino

June 10, X

Temple of Set

Tomb It May Concern:

Several of you have brought to my attention a little gem entitled "Hoisted by His Own Patois". This letter [a copy of which was not sent directly to me] is Anton LaVey's response to my recent communiques regarding the corruption of the Church of Satan and the creation of a new organization in its place. Dr. LaVey, incidentally, has received copies of all these communiques directly from me.

"Hoisted by His Own Patois" is factually inaccurate and quite insulting in tone. I had half-expected something like this, as I intimated in my June 16 letter to you. And, as I said I would, I will now clarify the factual points and disregard the tone.

Power corrupts, and absolute power corrupts absolutely. Dr. LaVey is correct in saying that I declined to subordinate my own common sense to his efforts to exploit the Church of Satan and its degree system. Hence I reproached his authoritarian attitude and refusal to respect the standards of ethics advertised by the Church over these many years. In the new organization [to be called the Temple of Set] the High Priest will not be in a position to abuse his office. Final authority will rest with a Council of Nine, of which the High Priest will not be a member. And administrative matters of the Temple will be overseen by an Executive Director also appointed by the Nine. The interrelationship between the Council, the High Priest, and the Executive Director will be one of cooperation, but it will also contain mutual checks and balances to safeguard the organization against the fate of the Church of Satan. All of this will be written into the Articles of Incorporation and By-Laws, copies of which will be sent to you as soon as the drafts are ready.

Anton LaVey then asserts that he never claimed to hold anything resembling an "Infernal Mandate" and that he regards his titles as High Priest and Exarch of Hell as symbolic and not literal. Taken at face value, such a statement would indicate that the Church of Satan and the Satanic Bible were nothing more than an elaborate con game in which LaVey exploited the name, imagery, and heritage of the Prince of Darkness. But I think his statement is not a true reflection of his actual feelings. For years Anton LaVey has spoken and written of the Prince of Darkness as an intelligent entity - not necessarily anthropomorphic, but quite real. This conviction of his is quite evident in both the Satanic Bible and many other documents of record. If he seeks now to pretend that he never meant any of it, it is probably because that is the only way he could hope to excuse his betrayal of that entity.

There was nothing supernatural in the Church of Satan, and there will be nothing supernatural in the Temple of Set. The Church of Satan did concern itself with experimentation in both formal and informal magic - being metaphysical assumptions and philosophical hypotheses for which there are not yet demonstrable scientific laws. The Temple of Set will carry this forward, because it is interesting, stimulating, educational, and just plain fun to do so.

I am next accused of "trying to mislead you in accordance with my own rigidly fixed moral code". It is true that I set great store by my personal integrity, but it is not true that my understanding of ethics is rigidly fixed. Throughout life we are constantly confronted by new information which expands our perspective and frequently necessitates an "updating" of personal philosophy. As for "misleading" recipients of the packets, I think that the contents and cover letter of those packets speak for themselves.

The next paragraph of Dr. LaVey's letter is as follows:

> "Judging from initial response to Mr. Aquino's packet, the vast majority of recipients have reaffirmed their alliance with the Church of Satan. Response has been most gratifying and will not be forgotten. His behavior has been described by communicants as: "petty", "priggish", "raging", "puritanical", "bitchy", "disgusting", "foppish", "overbearing","unimaginative", "lacking perception", "autistic", etc. - the list is long and varied, but unanimous on certain points."

The packets were sent to all of the officials listed in the enclosure to my June 26 letter, plus Dr. & Mrs. LaVey, Magister John Ferro, Magister Adrian-Claude Frazier, Reverend Stephen Hollander, Reverend Stuart Levine, Warlock William R. Payne, Reverend & Mrs. James Stowe, and Reverend & Mrs. Paul Pipkin. To date I have received no responses from any of these people indicating the slightest dissatisfaction with my actions or decisions - save from Anton LaVey and Paul Pipkin, both of whom have commented upon my personality rather than upon the actual issue raised.

Since Dr. LaVey does not get around to identifying the individuals comprising that "vast majority" of his, I confess myself somewhat suspicious of his mathematics. Perhaps he ran off a few dozen more copies of that packet and sent them off to officials of whom I have never heard ...? In any event, this mystery is easily resolved. Simply talk to one another, and you will discover who thinks what. Q.E.D.

Anton LaVey next expresses increasing dissatisfaction with the Cloven Hoof, saying that only his frequent intervention salvaged it from Editorial abuse. If in fact he was dissatisfied with the Hoof, he certainly did a good job of concealing it from me. In leafing through letters from him and Diane following each issue, I find nothing but compliments. And, as for his "instructions to print items which I subsequently altered in both content and meaning", that's not quite accurate. Since I was first invited to edit the Hoof back in Louisville, I have received almost no input from San Francisco save the Anton LaVey essay. Such alterations as I did make in material not written by me were limited to the unsplitting of infinitives, the correction of grammar/spelling/punctuation, and the occasional deletion of something which I thought the readership might find offensive or undignified.

With only one or two exceptions, each issue of the Hoof was typed in final camera copy by me in Santa Barbara and forwarded to 6114 prior to the turn of the month in question. Delays in the distribution of each issue were due to printing and mailing procedures in San Francisco. When any issue of the Hoof was returned to me for changes of any sort, a new camera copy was in the mail within 24 hours.

As a matter of fact I am adding a few more certificates to my wall full of them right now - a Master's degree in Political Science from the University of California, a diploma of graduation from the Officer's Advanced Course of the U.S. Army Armor School at Fort Knox, and a certificate of appreciation just received from the National Council of the Boy Scouts of America. Those who have seen my study know that my IV° certificate from Dr. LaVey occupies a place of prominence above and apart from the other 31 documents. I was quite satisfied with the IV° and in fact had just taken delivery on some fancy IV° stationery at a rather hefty price when this situation developed.

Apart from Tony, I am aware of two other individuals who received the blue Baphomet - John Ferro of San Francisco and Adrian-Claude Frazier of Denver. I have always maintained friendly relations with both of them, as their letters to me and mine to them evidence. I seem to recall that I also pestered Anton and Diane unmercifully for months to get them to restore John Ferro's IV°, which had been invalidated following the cessation of group activities at 6114 some years ago. In short, I encourage the titular recognition of those who deserve it, but I was and still am opposed to the bestowing of degrees for any other reason than demonstrated competence.

Upon my elevation to the III° in June of V, I was informed by Anton LaVey that I was to consider myself a member of the Council of Nine. Subsequently I was presented with the special medallion bearing the trapezoid/pentagram/trident seal of that body. Subsequently I attended occasional meetings at 6114 with Magister Ferro, the LaVeys, and other ladies and gentlemen who certainly talked as though they were the Council of Nine. If all this was an elaborate show for my benefit, then I can only compliment Anton and Diane for the elaborate rehearsing of roles and lines that was obviously required. And, if there is another Council of Nine lurking in the shadows somewhere, I can only observe that it hasn't done any of us much good!

From the letters and face-to-face comments I have been getting from many of you during these last couple of weeks, it does indeed appear that I was getting cut off from certain Church developments. Mail sent to me c/o San Francisco was not forwarded if the contents disturbed the status quo, and both officials and members of the Church were constantly discouraged from writing to me by "Lana Green" and "John Kincaid". Now a whole lot of facts are coming out in the wash, and I continue to be amazed at some of the things that have been going on.

My mailing list is hardly fractional: Since November of VI I have maintained and updated the entire Hoof mailing list, for the simple reason that it had previously been in such a mess that 6114 was inundated with requests for missed issues, repeated address changes, repeated renewals, and new memberships not included on the list. If you were a member back in those grand old days, you probably remember the fun - particularly if you were a Grotto Leader!

Furthermore, whoever was in charge of "keeping my list fractional for security reasons" did a pretty rotten job of it. Included on the list, as I mentioned in my 6/10 letter to the LaVeys, are a flock of the LaVeys' personal friends and publishing correspondents and Hollywood jet-setters. If I had indeed gone bananas and set out to ruin Anton LaVey, I wouldn't have missed the chance to send Diane's 6/4 letter to such people. How do you think some of the Beverly Hills gang would react to a scheme to milk them by selling them degrees? Probably not too enthusiastically. But I have not done so, I do not intend to do so, and I don't want any of you to do so. It will help nothing at this point, and it would only hurt the LaVeys. We concentrate only on cleaning our own house, right?

Yes, I am opposed to material contributions as qualification for degrees. I have set forth my reasoning in the letters included in my packet, and I don't think I need to go over it again. To say that buying a degree is an alternative to earning one is, to my way of thinking, worse than scrapping individual accomplishment altogether and redesignating the degrees as simply a money-making gimmick. As Diane so accurately points out in her 6/4 letter, it is precisely because the degrees have always symbolized personal prowess that they are desirable.

As for the Church of Satan's "progressing according to plan (including schism)", all I can say is that it must be some wild sort of plan indeed, involving the destruction of the Church of Satan, the discrediting of its High Priest, and a great deal of unhappiness and disillusionment among all of its officials and members. And why? Because of a stupid scheme to make a fast buck that would not have succeeded even if it had been implemented. Some plan indeed.

And finally, Dr. LaVey - for you are getting a copy of this too - you have some gall to say that you will nurture "hard feelings" against those who have trusted you and followed you for years, only to find their achievements prostituted for a financial stunt. Rather you should count yourself lucky that we are trying to approach the situation constructively, set this incident to rest as gently as possible, and think of you in terms of the many positive achievements you have authored. If you can't help us, then I suggest you leave us alone until a future time when old wounds will not seem so painful. Perhaps then we may work together once again, as I believe the Prince of Darkness would prefer.

Xeper.

Michael A. Aquino
Magus V°
High Priest of Set

TEMPLE OF SET

Thank you for your inquiry. The T∵S∵ is an institution unlike any that you have previously encountered. Before you can make an intelligent decision concerning possible affiliation, it is necessary for you to understand what the T∵S∵ is, what it is not, what it is doing at present, what it expects to do in the future, and what benefits/obligations each Setian incurs.

WHAT IT IS

The T∵S∵ is an initiatory order ordained by and dedicated to Set. It is a religious institution in the sense that Set is revered as an intelligent entity who possesses both the perspective and the prerogative to effect changes in the natural Universe in disregard of its intrinsic inertia. The extraordinary intelligence potential of the human race is one such change, being in direct contradiction of the laws of natural evolution. *The Book of Coming Forth By Night*, a statement by Set on the North Solstice of 1975 C.E., reestablished the T∵S∵ and admonished its Initiates to pursue a further evolution of mental presence and power – an ultimate "Coming Into Being" (the hieroglyphic concept of *xeper* – pronounced "Khepher").

The advent of the Aeon of Set (announced in 1975 but dated from 1966) was not an entirely spontaneous development. It was the culmination of 100,000+ years of human brain expansion, of 5,000 years' mental exercise in accepted science and unaccepted science (the Black Arts), of 71 years' final purification and refinement of magical theory (the Aeon of Horus), and of 9 years' final metamorphosis (the Age of Satan). Factors from all of these preconditions are included in T∵S∵ methodology. It is a vast panorama which we embrace, but the sheer ambition of our *raison d'etre* tolerates nothing less.

Accordingly you will not find the philosophy of the T∵S∵ easy to comprehend. Before you can even begin to "talk its language", you will have to read a substantial amount of reference material, engage in extensive written and/or verbal dialogue with other Setians, and – most importantly – formulate the resultant information into a systematic philosophy which is both satisfactory to you and appropriate for discussion with others. The T∵S∵ will help by providing media for general communication, essays and articles by specialists in our various fields of interest, lists of the most useful reference material, and personalized guidance from the Priesthood of Set. But the initiative to make use of such assistance must be yours.

Successful comprehension of basic T∵S∵ tenets will accord you a working knowledge of the real Black Arts – not the superstitious mumbo-jumbo of mental primitives or the degenerate practices imagined by paranoid ignoranti from conventional religions, but an extremely complex system of change and control effected by Will. Each new Setian I° must demonstrate an understanding of the principles of theoretical and operational magic within two years of initial affiliation. Those who succeed in doing so are confirmed as Adepts II° of the T∵S∵. Those who fail are returned to normal human society as unsuited for the rigorous mental pressures of the third-stage evolutionary process – *Setamorphosis.*

If this I° evaluation process seems harsh, it is because the T∵S∵ makes no pretense that it is "something for everyone". Both high intelligence and a very rare sense of magical and philosophical perspective are necessary characterisitics of Setians. Qualities such as these are present only in comparatively few individuals. Education and personal effort can bring them out if they are latent; indeed this is the purpose of the T∵S∵. But nothing can be done if the qualities do not exist in latent form.

The I° evaluation process is intended to benefit both the individual applicant and the T∵S∵ itself. Persons who are not Setians will experience only frustration and bewilderment in the T∵S∵, and they will be both happier and more productive in other, less stringent philosophical schools. Such a mutual-evaluation process was used by certain initiatory orders of ancient Egypt, and later by Pythagoras at his Krotona academy. Moreover an individual decision concerning one's aptitude for the T∵S∵ is not possible from a non-I° vantage-point, since the publications, services, and activities of the T∵S∵ are not available to the public.

The T∵S∵ does not foster a dogmatic environment after the fashion of conventional religions. Each Setian possesses a Will capable of exerting degrees of control on the natural Universe; he is also the potential creator of a unique, non-natural Universe. Meetings scheduled with monotonous regularity, "audience" ceremonies, and rote-chanting of rituals are hardly conducive to such ambitious concepts. Periodic Conclaves are held within the T∵S∵, but on a special basis and generally with only a select few attending. Much more frequent are small, interpersonal meetings between individuals, as well as social/philosophical symposia conducted by Pylons (local units of the T∵S∵). Correspondence plays a major role, enabling Setians from all parts of the Earth to exchange ideas, information and opinions.

Communication within the T∵S∵ is of vital importance. Our major projects are far too complex to be adequately evaluated or advanced by only one or two magicians. Moreover our purpose is not simply to refine and accumulate knowledge; it is to provide an environment in which each one of our Initiates can explore, understand, discuss, and apply such knowledge. Ultimately a continuing dialogue is essential for the *xeper* of both individuals and the T∵S∵ itself.

The T∵S∵ augments and encourages the exchange of information by two primary means: (1) *The Scroll of Set*, newsletter and forum of the T∵S∵, is published monthly and mailed to all Setians. Inasmuch as the

Scroll is intended to disseminate ideas for open discussion, material published therein does not necessarily indicate established doctrine. (2) *The Ruby Tablet of Set* is a loose-leaf, progressively-updated encyclopaedia of T∴S∴ magical, philosophical, operational, and aesthetic writings. It is not issued to each Initiate, but it is available for acquisition by all II° + Setians. Once an individual obtains a copy of the basic document, he may order the periodic changes and updates (announced in the *Scroll*). The *Ruby Tablet* is not made available to I°s in order to avoid vampirism of the T∴S∴ by persons who have not demonstrated their sincere interest in and aptitude for it.

Also included in the *Ruby Tablet* is the T∴S∴ reading list, designed to be a guide to the most substantive literature in a variety of categories of interest to the Setian. Like the *Ruby Tablet* as a whole, the reading list is regularly revised and expanded as necessary. It may seem odd that the reading list is not released to I°s, but there is a reason for this: As part of the evaluation process, each I° is expected to demonstrate his ability to discern reference material of academic merit. Accordingly it would be self-defeating to provide each person with a list of works which could simply be parroted. In the I° evaluation it is the *potential* of the individual which is being measured—*not* familiarity with T∴S∴ philosophy per se. Once a I° has been recognized as a II°, the environment changes. Now the function of the T∴S∴ is to facilitate and expedite research, communication, and expression. Hence guides such as the reading list and the *Ruby Tablet* become important and beneficial.

It is important to note that the *Scroll*, the *Ruby Tablet*, and such other media as regional and Pylon newsletters are intended as *supplements to* and not *replacements for* direct, interpersonal contact. A Setian who merely absorbs and internalizes data is of no use to either himself or to others within the T∴S∴. And his sense of perspective will quickly suffer distortion, impairing the value of the information at his disposal. So a continuing dialogue in the highest Platonic tradition is an absolute necessity to the Initiate. Those who have existing friends in the T∴S∴ have no trouble finding opportunities for dialogue; frequently they have problems trying to squeeze it all in! New Setians with no prior contacts are provided with the addresses of both Adepts and Initiates of the Priesthood (III°+) to whom they may introduce themselves. Again the initiative to open such contact remains with the I°. There is another aspect to I°-III° contact: Only a III°+ may recognize a I° to the II°. And Priests or Priestesses are unlikely to recognize those with whom they have had insufficient dialogue.

A further word may be said concerning the Priesthood of Set III°. In conventional religions, priests are generally considered to be spiritual "shepherds of a flock of sheep" too ignorant and naive to see to their own enrichment. This is not the case in the T∴S∴. The Priesthood of Set is not an office which a person may secure by virtue of training and passing of tests. Rather it is a sacred designation of certain individuals by Set. While a Priest is encouraged and expected to accept students and correspondents within the T∴S∴, Setians have no "right" to his time and attention. Contact with the Priesthood must be earned and sustained by the *worth* of the exchange of ideas that occurs.

What, in summary, is the T∴S∴? It is a device, a research tool to help Setians *xeper*. It has value only insofar as it contributes to this prospect. For the individual the idea is not to "join" the T∴S∴ per se; it is to enter an environment where one may meet Setians, engage in dialogue, and formulate an evolutionary philosophy to attain a new level of mental state of being and prerogative.

WHAT IT IS NOT:

As the Judaic/Christian legend of Satan and Satanism came down through the centuries, greater and greater crimes were cited as embellishments to it. Satanists were accused *a priori* of any dastardly deed that could be imagined. The idea of a "good Satanist" was a contradiction in terms. Ironically the prophecy became self-fulfilling. Persons who aspired to Satanism assumed that cannibalism, grave-robbing, church-desecration, sex orgies, and grotesque ceremonies were "the way to do it." One might as well learn how to be a Roman Catholic by asking Mohammed! And yet even today we hear of self-proclaimed "Satanists" who enthusiastically follow the prescriptions of Hollywood horror movies and Gothic novels.

The T∴S∴ is neither anti-Christian nor anti-anything else. It is not a *reaction*; it is a *positive* philosophy with a cosmology drawn from its own convictions, conclusions, and observations. It makes no attempt to fit a mold of what non-Setians think it "should be". *Set* defines the T∴S∴, and Setians are what *we are* and do what *we do*. Q.E.D.

The T∴S∴ considers other religions erroneous and therefore irrelevant. Consequently there is no need to lampoon, insult, or otherwise attack them. Or, for that matter, to maintain any sort of "diplomatic relations" with them. Our position is that they may serve a useful purpose as sponsors of a soothing fantasy for humans who are unable to attain Setian levels of intelligence. Hence we leave them alone – and in fact refer appropriate individuals to them.

While the T∴S∴ considers itself the authentic revival of the original Set cult of ancient Egypt, we lay no claim to any "unbroken thread" with the original order. To the best of our knowledge, it was exterminated by persecution not later than the XXV Dynasty (about 700 B.C.E.). The present T∴S∴ derives its authority not by a piecing-together of antique doctrines, but *directly from Set* via the *Book of Coming Forth By Night*. Accordingly the T∴S∴ is not an "Egyptian" religion transplanted to modern times. It is something that is beyond identification with any one culture, and it is configured to the present level of Setian development - not to the levels of 3,000 years ago.

The T∴S∴, as was noted earlier, is an evolutionary product of human experience. Such experience includes the philosophical and magical work of many occult organizations and orders which have preceded us. Many of these groups were reputable; others were not. In "picking their brains" for valuable information and research data, the T∴S∴ draws a sharp distinction against practices which are obviously harmful, depraved, destructive, and/or unethical. Such degradations are not necessary to the progress of the T∴S∴ and are therefore repugnant to it on aesthetic grounds. Persons who advocate or engage in practices unworthy of a Setian will not gain – or retain – affiliation with the T∴S∴. This is a "common sense" point and thus needs no further elaboration. Any doubts regarding a specific practice can be resolved by contacting a Priest or Priestess of Set.

The T∴S∴ is not egalitarian; it is elitist. The desires of a I° or II° do not carry the same weight as those of the Priesthood. And the masses of humanity outside the T∴S∴ are a matter of Setian unconcern. As with our attitude toward conventional religions, this should not be equated with antagonism. More precisely it is a realization that all people cannot and should not be Setians, and that the T∴S∴ is neither designed nor intended to influence non-Setian masses. We are a special institution for special individuals, and beyond this it would be unproductive for us to venture. Appropriately the T∴S∴ is completely apolitical, and its Initiates are free to do what they wish in this area – provided that their activities are both legal and ethical.

The T∴S∴ is administratively based in the State of California, United States of America. This state and this nation guarantee the existence and the protection of the Setian religion by the U.S. Constitution and both state and federal legislation. To formalize this fact the T∴S∴ is incorporated as a non-profit religious institution in California, and it has received secular recognition of its authenticity as a religion by the California Franchise Tax Board and the U.S. Internal Revenue Service. This protection, recognition, and trust will not be abused by the T∴S∴ or any of its Initiates. Again this is a matter of common sense, and questions concerning it can be resolved through the Priesthood.

The Priesthood of Set is responsible for preserving the authenticity and integrity of the T∴S∴. Priests and Priestesses have extensive prerogatives to enable them to perform this function, including withdrawal of the I° and II° if necessary.

The T∴S∴ is not intended to be oppressive or intimidating, either to Setians or to non-Setians. In fact it is a forum in which there is unprecedented intellectual freedom. But it occupies a delicate position in a world which is largely unhappy with itself and which is not averse to finding scapegoats for its many maladies. Hence the T∴S∴ must maintain its "balance" with extreme care. If our doctrines and our research were more comprehensible to the masses, or if our designs were not so ambitious, this would not be necessary.

WHAT IT IS DOING AT PRESENT:

Since June of 1975 C.E. the T∴S∴ has confronted a tremendously complex task: that of configuring itself in a posture capable of addressing its *raison d'etre*. The old presuppositions of Satanism had to be refined to Setian standards. A variety of "occult" sciences had to be examined for possible value. Immense numbers of reference documents had to be combed for principles applicable to the new Aeon. Most ambitiously, the entire scenario of human history and civilization required reexamination from a Setian perspective. And throughout the entire process Setians have had to discuss the implications of the Aeon with one another – to try to come to a working consensus on the level of organization and activity the T∴S∴ could reasonably expect to maintain.

While it is obvious that we have more than enough interests to occupy an organization with many times our membership and resources on a full-time basis, the T∴S∴ is not designed to consume the energies or the life-styles of its Initiates. In the T∴S∴ the *xeper* of the individual takes precedence over that of the institution as a whole. Since the Adept magician must interact with conventional society to some degree, encouragement of a monastic isolation within T∴S∴ circles would be counterproductive to personal development and even dangerous to the flexibility of the entire T∴S∴. Setians are advised to pursue as wide a variety of secular interests as possible, and to let T∴S∴ philosophy impact those areas as it may seem appropriate. Obsession is as harmful as ignorance.

Structurally, then, the T∴S∴ itself is designed to be as "lightweight" as possible. Administration and "red tape" are kept to an absolute minimum, and such bureaucracy as exists is periodically reexamined to eliminate all but the necessary functions. We have no plans to acquire real estate or fixed administrative facilities of any sort, though it is possible that the T∴S∴ may take sites of sacred or historic value in trust. But our overall policy is that the T∴S∴ should never become tied down to any locality and/or system of operation. It must be free to *xeper*.

At any one point in time the interests, emphases, and activities of the T∴S∴ are as kaleidoscopic as those of its many Initiates. Perhaps the headings of the categories on our reading list will convey a general idea of our current scope: Ancient Egyptian History; Ancient Egyptian Philosophy; Religion and Daemonology in Historical Perspective; Occultism in Contemporary Perspective; Atlantis; Satanism; H.P. Lovecraft; Vampirism and Lycanthropy; The Aeon of Horus; The Golden Dawn and its Predecessors; John Dee and the Enochian System; the Pythagoreans; Sex in Religion and Magic; The Gift of Set; Life and Death; The Metamind; Fascism, Totalitarianism, and Magic; Computers and Cybernetics; Good and Evil; The Four Dimensions; The Future; Toward the Unknown Region (space research); Poetry. Even this list undergoes constant revision and expansion, and it is merely a point of departure – not a boundary.

Communications, executive, and administrative systems of the T∴S∴ are decentralized to the greatest possible extent. This is both to share the load of such work and to help ensure that authority never becomes concentrated in a single individual, group or locality. Our ambition is to make the T∴S∴ as sensitive to the desires and needs of isolated Setians as it is to those of our larger Pylons.

WHAT IT EXPECTS TO DO IN THE FUTURE:

This is a very difficult question for an institution with no preconceived ideas concerning its destination (a logical consequence of the presupposition of Free Will). The rate of *xeper* in the T∵S∵ must be experienced to be fully appreciated. In the summer of 1975 not one Setian suspected that the T∵S∵ would evolve as rapidly as it did during the next twelve months, and since that time the tempo has continued to increase at a logarithmic progression. The only "brake" upon the phenomenon has been the time available for Setians to cope with it.

Initiates of the T∵S∵ have become accustomed to rapid changes in the institution in relatively short periods of time, and such an environment is likely to continue. Hence persons who seek a "stabilized society" with which to identify (as distinct from a philosophy which is internally consistent and externally practical) may be in for a bit of a shock. Some magicians who have been quite competent in other areas have proved unable to withstand the psychological trauma of the *xeper*-process and have reacted emotionally against it. Before you board this "magical roller-coaster", then, take some time to consider whether you have the stamina for it.

Those who have experienced *xeper* have generally felt a varying degree of alienation toward the clumsiness and foolishness of conventional society, as well as a sense of being "farther into the future" than the normal individual. The intellectual facilities are sharpened, personal/social/environmental situations become instantly significant for the actual influences and consequences therein, and personal powers become both recognizable and usable. The Setian Adept becomes, in effect, the Nietzschean superman. But with such a Setamorphosis comes the problem of existing in normal society without causing fear, antagonism, or persecution. Solving this problem often requires a significant amount of time, attention and patience.

As was noted earlier, one of the key interests of the T∵S∵ is futures research – the systematic estimation of future social, scientific, and environmental conditions – and the formulation of contingency plans for the T∵S∵ and its Initiates in a variety of possible situations. The First Foundation of the T∵S∵ pursues this task both by scanning existing futures research publications and by conducting its own research via techniques unique to the T∵S∵. We are conducting similar research in the inter-related fields of communications and computer-technology, with the ultimate goal of welding all three areas together into a continously evolving, reinforcing, and practical package for enhancement and augmentation of *xeper*.

AFFILIATION AND ITS CONSEQUENCES:

If you wish to apply for admission to the T∵S∵, as a Setian I°, there are two avenues of approach open to you:

(1) If you are already in contact with a Priest or Priestess of Set, you may request him or her to sponsor your application. In that case you may send a letter to the Executive Director (T∵S∵; Post Office Box 243; Santa Barbara, CA 93102) mentioning this sponsorship. With your letter enclose a check or money order for $37.00, payable to *Temple of Set*. When III° confirmation is received, approval of your admission will be automatic.

(2) If you are not known to a member of the Priesthood, write a letter to the Executive Director introducing yourself and stating your reasons for application. Enclose the initial membership fee. The Executive Director is authorized to make a decision concerning your admission and respond to you accordingly. If necessary, you will be asked for additional information, or outside verification of key statements will be requested. Should your application not be approved for any reason, your check will be returned. Persons applying for admission by this procedure should understand that they are not expected to "jump through hoops" to qualify. There are no admission quotas, and there are no hard-and-fast requirements – except sincerity and a reasonably-probable capacity to understand and apply our philosophy and methodology.

If your application is approved, you will receive notification from the Executive Director, together with an identification card, T∵S∵ I° medallion, and initial membership documentation. From Santa Barbara you will receive a special certificate designed for mounting and framing. Called the *Stele of Xeper*, it attests to your Setian initiatory state of being in a combination of English and hieroglyphic. Finally you will be provided with the names of some recommended personal contacts within both the general membership and the Priesthood.

And then . . . it is all up to you. The T∵S∵ is designed to assist you in every possible way. But, elaborate as it is, it is *nothing more than a tool. You* are the one who must put that tool to use in a way that will enable you to *xeper*. Such is the Word of the Aeon of Set.

THE TEMPLE OF SET

Eastern Michigan University
Ypsilanti, Michigan 48197

July 10, 1983

Dear Michael Aquino:

Thank you for sending me a copy of your letter to Gini Scott. I did not know her book The Magicians was out although I knew it was in press.

Her earlier book , Cult and Countercult (Greenwood, 1980) was an outgrowth of her doctoral dissertation. I am not sure what makes you think The Magicians was her dissertation.

In any case, it was nice to hear from you after some years.Since you are back in San Francisco, I wonder if you are now back in touch with Anton LaVey. Perhaps time has healed matters somewhat between you.

I will have to get a copy of The Magicians now that it is out in final form. I have not heard from Gini Scott in some time and I wondered what happened to her book.

Sincerely,

Marcello Truzzi

Department of Sociology
(313) 487-0012

TEMPLE OF SET

1850 UNION STREET #301
SAN FRANCISCO, CALIFORNIA 94123

July 5, 1983 CE

Dr. Gini G. Scott
c/o- Irvington Publishers, Inc.
551 Fifth Avenue
New York, New York 10017

Dear Dr. Scott:

I have just read your The Magicians and feel that there are a few comments I should make in response.

Several years ago Marcello Truzzi approached me to study the Temple of Set. Since I had observed his academic exploitation of the Church of Satan some years earlier, I refused him. You may deduce why from the following discussion:

The Church of Satan and Temple of Set have confronted a number of major problems in design and doctrine. They have had to refute and correct old stereotypical images of "Satan", "Black Magic", and the like. They have had to conceive and develop a philosophy based upon some unusual precepts concerning the universe and mankind's relationship to it. Finally they have had to work out an organizational profile that successfully resolves the tension between individualism and group cooperation. These are all major problems, unlikely to be solved in a few years' time. The Church and then the Temple have approached them flexibly, always attempting to encourage experimentation with new proposals towards their resolution. Some ideas have worked and some have failed, but the climate of open exploration has never been curtailed.

An observer watching such an unstructured environment will of course see some of the successes and some of the failures. Generally the failures appear more conspicuous because the successes tend to be integrated smoothly into whatever cooperative climate the group has managed to achieve. Failures also tend to make those who failed look deficient and even ridiculous [particularly via hindsight]. Since intelligent people don't wish to appear stupid or foolish, they are reluctant to surface unusual ideas unless they have a reasonable expectation that such ideas will not be scorned a priori by their colleagues. I hardly need make reference to the unpredictability of the conventional academic community in responding to unusual and disturbing ideas within an "established" or "accepted" discipline.

All of which is to say that your covert investigation of the Temple was simply premature insofar as the organization's philosophy was concerned. This is not a religion in which dogma are conclusively established and enforced from the outset, but one in which a consensus is being sought that can accept and encompass a number of admittedly rough hypotheses, each of whose scientific validity is itself not conclusively proven.

Heedless or mindless of this you rushed to judgment, presumably to assemble something provocative and entertaining for your dissertation (of which I expect this book is a revision). The result was a portrayal of the Temple as something at best foolish and at worst dangerous - which could be said of any incomplete structure in which critical supports are as yet lacking. You have thus obtained whatever personal rewards you could, while giving no thought to the difficulties your critical portrayal might cause for the still-developing Temple. [The disguising of its name was a pointless gesture, since the Temple of Set is easily identifiable from your account to anyone who might make inquiry within appropriate circles.]

When the Temple has given accounts of itself to the public, we have indeed done so in prepared packages. The intent has never been to deceive or mislead, but rather to present a picture that is fair to us and comprehensible to a public with very little background in our areas of interest. By contrast your analysis suggests the proverbial bull in a china shop, implying as it does that the human shortcomings in many affiliates of the Temple make their lofty aspirations a pathetic farce.

I have no right to criticize you for being what you are, and for using the Temple of Set as much and as long as you could deceive it, any more than - as I remarked to Truzzi - I can criticize a mosquito for drinking blood from my arm. I can, however, reaffirm that we dislike being hosts to parasites and will rid ourselves of them as soon as they are exposed as such. To his credit Truzzi never felt that he had to conceal his ulterior motives. To your discredit you did conceal yours - which amounts to a lie to honest people who had befriended and trusted you with some of their most sensitive and intimate thoughts. In time you may mature enough to feel ashamed of the lack of ethics in this particular "research". If this is in fact your dissertation, and had I been on your committee, I would have given you a lecture about integrity in research procedures, chucked this paper into a wastebasket, and sent you out to try again on a different subject.

From 1975 the Temple of Set has attempted to be as open and accessible to sincere enquirers as possible. If we were the paranoid, hostile, and shallow organization you ultimately paint us as being, then we would now react to your book by making ourselves just that much less accessible to newcomers. But, possibly to your surprise, we will continue to be as open as we reasonably can, whether or not your book makes our task more difficult. You see, we did not create the Temple as a means to social prestige or notoriety, but as a means to explore something sublime and unique that we sensed in higher humanity. And that is a point which, with all of your scholarly verbiage, you have completely missed.

Many of those whom you met have indeed fallen by the wayside for one reason or another. Some couldn't handle the strain of such a difficult cosmology and philosophy; others couldn't handle a social environment built on so nebulous a consensus; still others fell victim to mundane personal problems which preempted their ability to behave as evolutionary beings. Nevertheless each dared in some way to reach out from That Which Is Known to That Which Is Intuitively Suspected, and only thus can the Temple grow toward a broadly based and tested set of intellectual principles approximating truth. For this reason each of our early initiates, no matter how primitive or modest his or her contribution, will be remembered and respected as an sincere and courageous explorer.

You, on the other hand, will be recalled - if indeed you are at all - with something akin to pity. You were fortunate enough to have had an opportunity which you had the conventional intellect to understand, but not the mature psyche to appreciate. Your only thought, it would seem, was to run to the marketplace and sell what you had found - and what the Temple had helped you find - and for what? The initials Ph.D.? Your name on the cover of a book?

There is nothing wrong with a doctorate; I myself hold one from the University of California. But I did not sell my soul for it. And that, Dr. Scott, appears to be what you have done. You will not miss it, to be sure - unless you eventually achieve sufficient self-consciousness to grasp the point of this letter.

Sincerely,

Michael A. Aquino
High Priest of Set

cc- Professor M. Truzzi

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TEMPLE OF SET

1850 UNION STREET #301
SAN FRANCISCO, CALIFORNIA 94123

July 15, 1983

Professor Marcello Truzzi
Department of Sociology
Eastern Michigan University
Ypsilanti, Michigan 48197

Dear Professor Truzzi:

Thank you for your letter of July 10. When Gini Scott entered the Temple, she didn't identify herself as a Ph.D., so I supposed this *Magicians* book to be her dissertation. I was unaware of the *Cult and Countercult* volume.

While some of Scott's observations and criticisms of the Temple are perceptive and sound, many of her facts are erroneous, since she drew her impressions from a fairly brief exposure to a single local Pylon and a few visiting Setians from other areas. As soon as her ulterior motive was exposed, she was expelled - not for "failure to progress", as she tries to suggest in the book, but simply out of disgust for her lack of ethics. Under separate cover I am sending you a copy of the *Crystal Tablet of Set*, the section of the *Jeweled Tablets* series given to Setians I°, so that you may compare Scott's portrayal with our own doctrinal statements if you are so inclined.

Anton LaVey and I remain estranged; the scars of 1975 have still not healed. The wounds ran deep, being the result of a dilemma between a virtual father/son-level of personal affection and an irreconcilable difference on a point of philosophical and metaphysical principle. He has never communicated with me personally since then, and my infrequent letters to him have been appropriately strained and formal. Whether or not the Temple of Set will ultimately achieve sufficient stability and sophistication to justify the agony of its conception continues to be an open qestion. As for the Church of Satan, I have yet to see any evidence that it survived 1975 as anything but a cynical pretence to its former vitality and authenticity.

Sincerely,

Michael A. Aquino